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INTRODUCTION

TO

THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

SCIENCE OF RELIGION,

FOUR LECTURES

DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION,

WITH

TWO ESSAYS

ON FALSE ANALOGIES, AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF MYTHOLOGY.

BY

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"QUOD UBIQUE, QUOD SEMPER, QUOD AB OMNIBUS."

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DEDICATED

TO RALPH WALDO EMERSON

IN MEMORY OF HIS VISIT TO OXFORD

IN MAY, M DCCC LXXIII,

AND IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CONSTANT REFRESHMENT

OF HEAD AND HEART

DERIVED FROM HIS WRITINGS

DURING THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.

PREFACE.

THESE Lectures which were intended as an introduction to a comparative study of the principal religions of the world, were delivered at the Royal Institution in London, in February and March 1870, and printed in Fraser's Magazine of February, March, April, and May of the same year. I declined at that time to publish them in a separate form, hoping that I might find leisure to work up more fully the materials which I had collected for many years. I thought that I should thus be enabled to make these lectures more interesting and more complete, and at the same time meet several objections that had been raised by some critics against the possibility of a scientific study of religions, and against my views on the origin, the growth, and the real value of the ancient systems of faith, elaborated by different branches of the human race. A small edition only was printed privately, and sent to some of my friends whose remarks have proved in many cases most valuable and instructive.

If now I have decided on republishing these Lectures, I have done so because I fear that as during the three years that have elapsed since their

delivery, so again during the years to come, I shall find little leisure for these researches. I have just finished a new edition of the text of the Rig-veda in four volumes, and I now feel bound to print the last volume of my large edition of the Rig-veda with the commentary of Sāyaṇa. When that is done, the translation of the hymns of the Rig-veda, of which the first volume was published in 1869, will have to be continued, and I see but little chance that, with these tasks before me, I shall be able to devote much time to my favourite study of ancient language, mythology, and religion.

I should gladly have left these Lectures to their ephemeral fate; but as they have been republished in America, and translated in France and Italy, they have become the subject of friendly and unfriendly remarks in several works on Comparative Theology. A German translation also being on the eve of publication, I at last determined to publish them in their original form, and to render them at least as perfect as I could at the present moment. The Lectures, as now printed, contain considerable portions which were written in 1870, but had to be left out in the course of delivery, and therefore also in Fraser's Magazine. I have inserted such corrections and supplementary notes as I had made from time to time in the course of my reading, and a few remarks were added at the last moment, whilst seeing these sheets through the Press.

For more complete information on many points touched upon in these Lectures, I must refer my readers to my Essays on the Science of Religion, and the Essays on Mythology, Traditions and Customs, published in 1867 under the title of 'Chips from a German Workshop.'

The literature of Comparative Theology is growing rapidly, particularly in America. The works of James F. Clarke, Samuel Johnson, O. B. Frothingham, the lectures of T. W. Higginson, W. C. Gannett, and J. W. Chadwick, the philosophical papers by F. E. Abbot, all show that the New World, in spite of all its preoccupations, has not ceased to feel at one with the Old World; all bear witness of a deep conviction that the study of the ancient religions of mankind will not remain without momentous practical results. That study, I feel convinced, if carried on in a bold, but scholar-like, careful, and reverent spirit, will remove many doubts and difficulties which are due entirely to the narrowness of our religious horizon; it will enlarge our sympathies, it will raise our thoughts above the small controversies of the day, and at no distant future evoke in the very heart of Christianity a fresh spirit, and a new life.

M. M.

Oxford, May 12, 1873.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

Lectures on the Science of Religion:—

Lecture I 1

Appendix to Lecture I 68

Lecture II 101

Lecture III 144

Lecture IV 217

On False Analogies in Comparative Theology . 283

On the Philosophy of Mythology . . . 335

FIRST LECTURE.

DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION,

FEBRUARY 19, 1870.

WHEN I undertook for the first time to deliver a course of lectures in this Institution, I chose for my subject the *Science of Language*. What I then had at heart was to show to you, and to the world at large, that the comparative study of the principal languages of mankind was based on sound and scientific principles, and that it had brought to light results which deserved a larger share of public interest than they had as yet received. I tried to convince not only scholars by profession, but historians, theologians, and philosophers, nay everybody who had once felt the charm of gazing inwardly upon the secret workings of his own mind, veiled and revealed as they are in the flowing folds of language,

that the discoveries made by comparative philologists could no longer be ignored with impunity; and I submitted that after the progress achieved in a scientific study of the principal branches of the vast realm of human speech, our new science, the Science of Language, might claim by right its seat at the Round-table of the intellectual chivalry of our age.

Such was the goodness of the cause I had then to defend, that, however imperfect my own pleading, the verdict of the public has been immediate and almost unanimous. During the years that have elapsed since the delivery of my first course of lectures, the Science of Language has had its full share of public recognition. Whether we look at the number of books that have been published for the advancement and elucidation of our science, or at the excellent articles in the daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, and quarterly reviews, or at the frequent notices of its results scattered about in works on philosophy, theology, and ancient history, we may well rest satisfied. The example set by France and Germany in founding chairs of Sanskrit and Comparative

Philology, has been followed of late in nearly all the universities of England, Ireland, and Scotland. We need not fear for the future of the Science of Language. A career so auspiciously begun, in spite of strong prejudices that had to be encountered, will lead on from year to year to greater triumphs. Our best public schools, if they have not done so already, will soon have to follow the example set by the universities. It is but fair that schoolboys who are made to devote so many hours every day to the laborious acquisition of languages, should now and then be taken by a safe guide to enjoy from a higher point of view that living panorama of human speech which has been surveyed and carefully mapped out by patient explorers and bold discoverers: nor is there any longer an excuse why, even in the most elementary lessons, nay I should say, why more particularly in these elementary lessons, the dark and dreary passages of Greek and Latin, of French and German grammar, should not be brightened by the electric light of Comparative Philology.

When last year I travelled in Germany I found that lectures on Comparative Philology

were attended in the universities by nearly all who study Greek and Latin. At Leipzig there were hundreds of students who crowded the lecture room of the Professor of Comparative Philology, and the classes of the Professor of Sanskrit consisted of more than fifty undergraduates, most of them wishing to acquire that amount of knowledge of Sanskrit which is absolutely necessary before entering upon a study of Comparative Grammar.

The introduction of Greek into the universities of Europe in the fifteenth century could hardly have caused a greater revolution than the discovery of Sanskrit and the study of Comparative Philology in the nineteenth. Very few indeed now take their degree of Master of Arts in Germany or would be allowed to teach at a public school, without having been examined in the principles of Comparative Philology, nay in the elements of Sanskrit grammar. Why should it be different in England? The intellectual fibre, I know, is not different in the youth of England and in the youth of Germany, and if there is but a fair field and no favour, Comparative Philology, I feel convinced, will soon hold in England

too, that place which it ought to hold at every public school, in every university, and in every classical examination [1].

In beginning to-day a course of lectures on the *Science of Religion*,—or I should rather say on some preliminary points that have to be settled before we can enter upon a truly scientific study of the religions of the world,—I feel as I felt when first pleading in this very place for the Science of Language.

I know that I shall have to meet determined antagonists who will deny the possibility of a scientific treatment of religions as they denied the possibility of a scientific treatment of languages. I foresee even a far more serious conflict with familiar prejudices and deep-rooted convictions; but I feel at the same time that I am prepared to meet my antagonists, and I have such faith in their honesty and love of

[1] Since this was written, Comparative Philology has been admitted to its rightful place in the University of Oxford. In the first Public Examination candidates for Honours in Greek or Latin Literature will be examined in the Elements of Comparative Philology as illustrating the Greek and Latin languages. In the final Public Examination, Comparative Philology will form a special subject, by the side of the history of Ancient Literature.

truth, that I doubt not of a patient and impartial hearing on their part, and of a verdict influenced by nothing but by the evidence that I shall have to place before them.

In these our days it is almost impossible to speak of religion without giving offence either on the right or on the left. With some, religion seems too sacred a subject for scientific treatment; with others it stands on a level with alchemy and astrology, as a mere tissue of errors or halucinations, far beneath the notice of the man of science.

In a certain sense, I accept both these views. Religion *is* a sacred subject, and whether in its most perfect or in its most imperfect form, it has a right to our highest reverence. In this respect we might learn something from those whom we are so ready to teach. I quote from the Declaration of Principles by which the church founded by Keshub Chunder Sen professes to be guided. After stating that no created object shall ever be worshipped, nor any man or inferior being or material object be treated as identical with God, or like unto God, or as an incarnation of God, and that no prayer or hymn shall be said

unto or in the name of any one except God, the declaration continues:

'No created being or object that has been or may hereafter be worshipped by any sect shall be ridiculed or contemned in the course of the divine service to be conducted here.'

'No book shall be acknowledged or received as the infallible Word of God: yet no book which has been or may hereafter be acknowledged by any sect to be infallible shall be ridiculed or contemned.'

'No sect shall be vilified, ridiculed, or hated.'

No one—this I can promise—who attends these lectures, be he Christian or Jew, Hindu or Mohammedan, shall hear his own way of serving God spoken of irreverently. But true reverence does not consist in declaring a subject, because it is dear to us, to be unfit for free and honest inquiry: far from it! True reverence is shown in treating every subject, however sacred, however dear to us, with perfect confidence; without fear and without favour; with tenderness and love, by all means, but, before all, with an unflinching and uncompromising loyalty to truth.

On the other hand, I fully admit that religion

has stood in former ages, and stands also in our own age, if we look abroad, and if we look into some of the highest and some of the lowest places at home, on a level with alchemy and astrology. There exist superstitions, little short of fetishism; and, what is worse, there exists hypocrisy, as bad as that of the Roman augurs.

In practical life it would be wrong to assume a neutral position between such conflicting views. Where we see that the reverence due to religion is violated, we are bound to protest; where we see that superstition saps the roots of faith, and hypocrisy poisons the springs of morality, we must take sides. But as students of the Science of Religion we move in a higher and more serene atmosphere. We study error, as the physiologist studies a disease, looking for its causes, tracing its influence, speculating on possible remedies, but leaving the application of such remedies to a different class of men, to the surgeon and the practical physician. *Diversos diversa juvant* applies here as everywhere else, and a division of labour, according to the peculiar abilities and tastes of different individuals, promises always

the best results. The student of the history of the physical sciences is not angry with the alchemists, nor does he argue with the astrologists: he rather tries to enter into their view of things, and to discover in the errors of alchemy the seeds of chemistry, and in the hallucinations of astronomy a yearning and groping after a true knowledge of the heavenly bodies. It is the same with the student of the Science of Religion. He wants to find out what Religion is, what foundation it has in the soul of man, and what laws it follows in its historical growth. For that purpose the study of errors is to him more instructive than the study of truth, and the smiling augur as interesting a subject as the Roman suppliant who veiled his face in prayer, that he might be alone with his God.

The very title of the Science of Religion will jar, I know, on the ears of many persons, and a comparison of all the religions of the world, in which none can claim a privileged position, will no doubt seem to many dangerous and reprehensible, because ignoring that peculiar reverence which everybody, down to the mere fetish worshipper, feels for his *own* religion and for his *own* God. Let me say then at once that I myself have

shared these misgivings, but that I have tried to overcome them, because I would not and could not allow myself to surrender either what I hold to be the truth, or what I hold still dearer than truth, the right of testing truth. Nor do I regret it. I do not say that the Science of Religion is all gain. No, it entails losses, and losses of many things which we hold dear. But this I will say, that, as far as my humble judgment goes, it does not entail the loss of anything that is essential to true religion, and that if we strike the balance honestly, the gain is immeasurably greater than the loss.

One of the first questions that was asked by classical scholars when invited to consider the value of the Science of Language, was, 'What shall we gain by a comparative study of languages?' Languages, it was said, are wanted for practical purposes, for speaking and reading; and by studying too many languages at once, we run the risk of losing the firm grasp which we ought to have on the few that are really important. Our knowledge, by becoming wider, must needs, it was thought, become shallower, and the gain, if there is any,

in knowing the structure of dialects which have never produced any literature at all, would certainly be outweighed by the loss in accurate and practical scholarship.

If this could be said of a comparative study of languages, with how much greater force will it be urged against a comparative study of religions! Though I do not expect that those who study the religious books of Brahmans and Buddhists, of Confucius and Laotse, of Mohammed and Nānak, will be accused of cherishing in their secret heart the doctrines of those ancient masters, or of having lost the firm hold on their own religious convictions, yet I doubt whether the practical utility of wider studies in the vast field of the religions of the world will be admitted with greater readiness by professed theologians than the value of a knowledge of Sanskrit, Zend, Gothic, or Celtic for a thorough mastery of Greek and Latin, and for a real appreciation of the nature, the purpose, the laws, the growth and decay of language was admitted, or is even now admitted, by some of our most eminent professors and teachers.

People ask, What is gained by comparison?

—Why, all higher knowledge is acquired by comparison, and rests on comparison. If it is said that the character of scientific research in our age is pre-eminently comparative, this really means that our researches are now based on the widest evidence that can be obtained, on the broadest inductions that can be grasped by the human mind.

What can be gained by comparison?—Why, look at the study of languages. If you go back but a hundred years and examine the folios of the most learned writers on questions connected with language, and then open a book written by the merest tiro in Comparative Philology, you will see what can be gained, what has been gained, by the comparative method. A few hundred years ago, the idea that Hebrew was the original language of mankind was accepted as a matter of course, even as a matter of faith, the only problem being to find out by what process Greek, or Latin, or any other language could have been developed out of Hebrew. The idea, too, that language was revealed, in the scholastic sense of the word, was generally accepted, although, as early as the fourth century, St. Gregory, the learned bishop of

Nyssa, had strongly protested against it[1]. The grammatical framework of a language was either considered as the result of a conventional agreement, or the terminations of nouns and verbs were supposed to have sprouted forth like buds from the roots and stems of language; and the vaguest similarity in the sound and meaning of words was taken to be a sufficient criterion for testing their origin and their relationship. Of all this philological somnambulism we hardly find a trace in works published since the days of Humboldt, Bopp, and Grimm.

Has there been any loss here? Has it not been pure gain? Does language excite our admiration less, because we know that, though the faculty of speaking is the work of Him who works in all things, the invention of words for naming each object was left to man, and was achieved through the working of the human mind? Is Hebrew less carefully studied, because it is no longer believed to be a revealed language, sent down from heaven, but a language closely allied to Arabic, Syriac and ancient Babylonian, and receiving light from

[1] Lectures on the Science of Language, vol. i. p. 32.

these cognate, and in some respects more primitive, languages, for the explanation of many of its grammatical forms, and for the exact interpretation of many of its obscure and difficult words? Is the grammatical articulation of Greek and Latin less instructive because instead of seeing in the terminations of nouns and verbs merely arbitrary signs to distinguish the plural from the singular, or the future from the present, we can now perceive an intelligible principle in the gradual production of formal out of the material elements of language? And are our etymologies less important, because, instead of being suggested by superficial similarities, they are now based on honest historical and physiological research? Lastly, has our own language ceased to hold its own peculiar place? Is our love for our own native tongue at all impaired? Do men speak less boldly or pray less fervently in their own mother tongue, because they know its true origin and its unadorned history; because they know that everything in language that goes beyond the objects of sense, is and must be pure metaphor? Or does any one deplore the fact that there is in all languages, even in the jargons of the

lowest savages, order and wisdom; nay, something that makes the world akin?

Why, then, should we hesitate to apply the comparative method, which has produced such great results in other spheres of knowledge, to a study of religion? That it will change many of the views commonly held about the origin, the character, the growth, and decay of the religions of the world, I do not deny; but unless we hold that fearless progression in new inquiries, which is our bounden duty and our honest pride in all other branches of knowledge, is dangerous in the study of religions, unless we allow ourselves to be frightened by the once famous dictum, that whatever is new in theology is false, this ought to be the very reason why a comparative study of religions should no longer be neglected or delayed.

When the students of Comparative Philology boldly adapted Goethe's paradox, '*He who knows one language, knows none*,' people were startled at first; but they soon began to feel the truth which was hidden beneath the paradox. Could Goethe have meant that Homer did not know Greek, or that Shakespeare did not know English, because neither of them

knew more than his own mother tongue? No! what was meant was that neither Homer nor Shakespeare knew what that language really was which he handled with so much power and cunning. Unfortunately the old verb 'to can,' from which 'canny' and 'cunning,' is lost in English, otherwise we should be able in two words to express our meaning, and to keep apart the two kinds of knowledge of which we are here speaking. As we say in German *können* is not *kennen*, we might say in English, *to can*, that is to be cunning, is not *to ken*, that is to know; and it would then become clear at once, that the most eloquent speaker and the most gifted poet, with all their cunning of words and skilful mastery of expression, would have but little to say if asked, what language really is? The same applies to religion. *He who knows one, knows none.* There are thousands of people whose faith is such that it could move mountains, and who yet, if they were asked what religion really is, would remain silent, or would speak of outward tokens rather than of the inward nature, or of the faculty of faith.

It will be easily perceived that religion means

at least two very different things. When we speak of the Jewish, or the Christian, or the Hindu religion, we mean a body of doctrines handed down by tradition, or in canonical books, and containing all that constitutes the faith of Jew, Christian, or Hindu. Using religion in that sense, we may say that a man has changed his religion, that is, that he has adopted the Christian instead of the Brahmanical body of religious doctrines, just as a man may learn to speak English instead of Hindustani. But religion is also used in a different sense. As there is a faculty of speech, independent of all the historical forms of language, so there is a faculty of faith in man, independent of all historical religions. If we say that it is religion which distinguishes man from the animal, we do not mean the Christian or Jewish religion; we do not mean any special religion; but we mean a mental faculty, that faculty which, independent of, nay in spite of sense and reason, enables man to apprehend the Infinite under different names, and under varying disguises. Without that faculty, no religion, not even the lowest worship of idols and fetishes, would be possible; and if we will but listen attentively,

we can hear in all religions a groaning of the spirit, a struggle to conceive the inconceivable, to utter the unutterable, a longing after the Infinite, a love of God. Whether the etymology which the ancients gave of the Greek word ἄνθρωπος, man, be true or not (they derived it from ὁ ἄνω ἀθρῶν, he who looks upward), certain it is that what makes man man, is that he alone can turn his face to heaven; certain it is that he alone yearns for something that neither sense nor reason can supply.

If then there is a philosophical discipline which examines into the conditions of sensuous or intuitional knowledge, and if there is another philosophical discipline which examines into the conditions of rational or conceptual knowledge, there is clearly a place for a third philosophical discipline that has to examine into the conditions of that third faculty of man, co-ordinate with sense and reason, the faculty of perceiving the Infinite, which is at the root of all religions. In German we can distinguish that third faculty by the name of *Vernunft*, as opposed to *Verstand*, reason, and *Sinne*, sense. In English I know no better name for it, than the faculty of faith, though it will have to be guarded by

careful definition, in order to confine it to those objects only, which cannot be supplied either by the evidence of the senses, or by the evidence of reason. No simply historical fact can ever fall under the cognisance of faith.

If we look at the history of modern thought, we find that the dominant school of philosophy, previous to Kant, had reduced all intellectual activity to *one* faculty, that of the senses. '*Nihil in intellectu quod non ante fuerit in sensu*'—'Nothing exists in the intellect but what has before existed in the senses,' was their watchword; and Leibniz answered it epigrammatically, but most profoundly, '*Nihil—nisi intellectus*,' 'Yes, nothing but the intellect.' Then followed Kant, who, in his 'Criticism of Pure Reason,' written ninety years ago, but not yet antiquated, proved that our knowledge requires, besides the data of our sensations, the admission of the intuitions of space and time, and the categories, or, as we might call them, the necessities of the understanding. Satisfied with having established the *a priori* character of the categories and the intuitions of space and time, or, to use his own technical language, satisfied with having proved the possibility of

synthetic judgments *a priori*, Kant declined to go further, and he most energetically denied to the human intellect the power of transcending the finite, or the faculty of approaching the Divine. He closed the ancient gates through which man had gazed into Infinity; but, in spite of himself, he was driven in his 'Criticism of Practical Reason,' to open a side-door through which to admit the sense of duty, and with it the sense of the Divine. This is the vulnerable point in Kant's philosophy, and if philosophy has to explain what is, not what ought to be, there will be and can be no rest till we admit, what cannot be denied, that there is in man a third faculty, which I call simply the faculty of apprehending the Infinite, not only in religion, but in all things; a power independent of sense and reason, a power in a certain sense contradicted by sense and reason, but yet a very real power, which has held its own from the beginning of the world, neither sense nor reason being able to overcome it, while it alone is able to overcome both reason and sense[1].

[1] As this passage has given rise to strange misunderstandings, I quote a passage from another lecture of mine,

According to the two meanings of the word religion, then, the science of religion is divided into two parts; the former, which has to deal with the historical forms of religion, is called *Comparative Theology;* the latter, which has

not yet published: 'It is difficult at present to speak of the human mind in any technical language whatsoever, without being called to order by some philosopher or other. According to some, the mind is one and indivisible, and it is the subject-matter only of our consciousness which gives to the acts of the mind the different appearances of feeling, remembering, imagining, knowing, willing or believing. According to others, mind, as a subject, has no existence whatever, and nothing ought to be spoken of except states of consciousness, some passive, some active, some mixed. I myself have been sharply taken to task for venturing to speak, in this enlightened 19th century of ours, of different faculties of the mind,—faculties being merely imaginary creations, the illegitimate offspring of mediaeval scholasticism. Now I confess I am amused rather than frightened by such pedantry. Faculty, *facultas*, seems to me so good a word that, if it did not exist, it ought to be invented in order to express the different modes of action of what we may still be allowed to call our mind. It does not commit us to more than if we were to speak of the *facilities* or *agilities* of the mind, and those only who change the forces of nature into gods or demons, would be frightened by the faculties as green-eyed monsters seated in the dark recesses of our Self. I shall therefore retain the name of faculty, &c.'

On the necessity of admitting a faculty for perceiving the Infinite I have treated more fully in my Lectures on the Science of Language, vol. ii. pp. 625–632.

to explain the conditions under which religion, whether in its highest or its lowest form, is possible, is called *Theoretic Theology*.

We shall at present have to deal with the former only; nay it will be my object to show that the problems which chiefly occupy theoretic theology, ought not to be taken up till all the evidence that can possibly be gained from a comparative study of the religions of the world has been fully collected, classified, and analysed. I feel certain that the time will come when all that is now written on theology, whether from an ecclesiastical or philosophical point of view, will seem as antiquated, as strange, as unaccountable as the works of Vossius, Hemsterhuys, Valckenaer, and Lennep, by the side of Bopp's Comparative Grammar.

It may seem strange that while theoretical theology, or the analysis of the inward and outward conditions under which faith is possible, has occupied so many thinkers, the study of comparative theology has never as yet been seriously taken in hand. But the explanation is very simple. The materials on which alone a comparative study of the religions of mankind could have been founded were not acces-

sible in former days, while in our own days they have come to light in such profusion that it is almost impossible for any individual to master them all.

It is well known that the Emperor Akbar (1542–1605)[1] had a passion for the study of religions, and that he invited to his court Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, Brahmans, and Zoroastrians, and had as many of their sacred books as he could get access to, translated for his own study[2]. Yet, how small was the collection of sacred books that even an Emperor of India could command not more than 300 years ago, compared to what may now be found in the library of any poor scholar! We have the original text of the Veda, which neither the bribes nor the threats of Akbar could extort from the Brahmans. The translation of the Veda which he is said to have obtained, was a translation of the so-called Atharva-veda, and comprised most likely the Upanishads only, mystic and philosophical treatises, very interesting, very important in themselves, but as

[1] See Appendix on Akbar, at the end of the first Lecture, p. 68.

[2] Elphinstone's History of India, ed. Cowell, book ix. cap. 3.

far removed from the ancient poetry of the Veda as the Talmud is from the Old Testament, as Sufiism is from the Koran. We have the Zendavesta, the sacred writings of the so-called fire-worshippers, and we possess translations of it, far more complete and far more correct than any that the Emperor Akbar could have obtained from Ardsher, a wise Zoroastrian whom he invited from Kirman to India[1]. The religion of Buddha, certainly in many respects more important than either Brahmanism, or Zoroastrianism, or Mohammedanism, is never mentioned in the religious discussions that took place every Thursday evening[2] at the imperial court of Delhi. Abulfazl, it is said, the minister of Akbar, could find no one to assist him in his inquiries respecting Buddhism. We possess the whole sacred canon of the Buddhists in various languages, in Pâli, Burmese, and Siamese, in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese, and it is our fault entirely, if as yet there is no complete translation in any European tongue of this important collection of sacred books.

[1] See Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1868, p. 14.

[2] See Aini Akbari, transl. by Blochmann, p. 171, note 3.

The ancient religions of China again, that of Confucius and that of Laotse, may now be studied in excellent translations of their sacred books by anybody interested in the ancient faiths of mankind.

But this is not all. We owe to missionaries particularly, careful accounts of the religious belief and worship among tribes far lower in the scale of civilisation than the poets of the Vedic hymns, or the followers of Confucius. Though the belief of African and Melanesian savages is more recent in point of time, it represents an earlier and far more primitive phase in point of growth, and is therefore as instructive to the student of religion as the study of uncultivated dialects has proved to the student of language[1].

Lastly, and this, I believe, is the most important advantage which we enjoy as students of the history of religion, we have been taught the rules of critical scholarship. No one would venture, now-a-days, to quote from any book, whether sacred or profane, without having

[1] See Tiele, De Plaats van de Godsdiensten der Natuurvolken in de Godsdienstgeschiedenis, Amsterdam, 1873. E. B. Tylor, Fortnightly Review, 1866, p. 71.

asked these simple and yet momentous questions: When was it written? Where? and by whom? Was the author an eye-witness, or does he only relate what he has heard from others? And if the latter, were his authorities at least contemporaneous with the events which they relate, and were they under the sway of party feeling or any other disturbing influence? Was the whole book written at once, or does it contain portions of an earlier date; and if so, is it possible for us to separate these earlier documents from the body of the book?

A study of the original documents on which the principal religions of the world profess to be founded, carried on in this spirit, has enabled some of our best living scholars to distinguish in each religion between what is really ancient and what is comparatively modern; between what was the doctrine of the founders and their immediate disciples, and what were the afterthoughts and, generally, the corruptions of later ages. A study of these later developments, of these later corruptions, or, it may be, improvements, is not without its own peculiar charm, and full of practical lessons; yet, as it is essential that we should know the

most ancient forms of every language, before we proceed to any comparisons, it is indispensable also that we should have a clear conception of the most primitive form of every religion, before we proceed to determine its own value, and to compare it with other forms of religious faith. Many an orthodox Mohammedan, for instance, will relate miracles wrought by Mohammed; but in the Koran Mohammed says distinctly, that he is a man like other men. He disdains to work miracles, and appeals to the great works of Allah, the rising and setting of the sun, the rain that fructifies the earth, the plants that grow, and the living souls that are born into the world—who can tell whence?—as the real signs and wonders in the eyes of a true believer.

The Buddhist legends teem with miserable miracles attributed to Buddha and his disciples —miracles which in wonderfulness certainly surpass the miracles of any other religion: yet in their own sacred canon a saying of Buddha's is recorded, prohibiting his disciples from working miracles, though challenged by the multitudes, who required a sign that they might believe. And what is the miracle that Buddha

commands his disciples to perform? 'Hide your good deeds,' he says, 'and confess before the world the sins you have committed.' That is the true miracle.

Modern Hinduism rests on the system of caste as on a rock which no arguments can shake: but in the Veda, the highest authority of the religious belief of the Hindus, no mention occurs of the complicated system of castes, such as we find it in Manu: nay, in one place, where the ordinary classes of the Indian, or any other society, are alluded to, viz. the priests, the warriors, the citizens, and the slaves, all are represented as sprung alike from Brahman, the source of all being.

It would be too much to say that the critical sifting of the authorities for a study of each religion has been already fully carried out. There is work enough still to be done. But a beginning, and a very successful beginning, has been made, and the results thus brought to light will serve as a wholesome caution to everybody who is engaged in religious researches. Thus, if we study the primitive religion of the Veda, we have to distinguish most carefully, not only between the hymns

of the Rig-veda on one side, and the hymns collected in the Sâma-veda, Yagur-veda, and Atharva-veda on the other, but critical scholars would distinguish with equal care between the more ancient and the more modern hymns of the Rig-veda itself, so far as even the faintest indications of language, of grammar, or metre enable them to do so.

In order to gain a clear insight into the motives and impulses of the founder of the worship of Ahuramazda, we must chiefly, if not entirely, depend on those portions of the Zendavesta which are written in the Gāthā dialect, a more primitive dialect than that of the rest of the sacred code of the Zoroastrians.

In order to do justice to Buddha, we must not mix the practical portions of the Tripiṭaka, the Dharma, with the metaphysical portions, the Abhidharma. Both, it is true, belong to the sacred canon of the Buddhists; but their original sources lie in very different latitudes of religious thought.

We have in the history of Buddhism an excellent opportunity for watching the process by which a canon of sacred books is called into existence. We see here, as elsewhere,

that during the lifetime of the teacher, no record of events, no sacred code containing the sayings of the master was wanted. His presence was enough, and thoughts of the future, and more particularly, of future greatness, seldom entered the minds of those who followed him. It was only after Buddha had left the world to enter into Nirvâ*n*a, that his disciples attempted to recall the sayings and doings of their departed friend and master. At that time everything that seemed to redound to the glory of Buddha, however extraordinary and incredible, was eagerly welcomed, while witnesses who would have ventured to criticise or reject unsupported statements, or to detract in any way from the holy character of Buddha, had no chance of even being listened to[1]. And when, in spite of all this, differences of opinion arose, they were not brought to the test by a careful weighing of evidence, but the names of 'unbeliever' and 'heretic' (nāstika, pāsha*nd*a) were quickly invented in India as elsewhere, and bandied backwards and forwards between contending parties, till at last,

[1] Mahāvansa, p. 12, Nā*mm*ehi tatha vatthabbam iti, 'it cannot be allowed to other priests to be present.'

when the doctors disagreed, the help of the secular power had to be invoked, and kings and emperors assembled councils for the suppression of schism, for the settlement of an orthodox creed, and for the completion of a sacred canon. We know of King Asoka, the contemporary of Seleucus, sending his royal missive to the assembled elders, and telling them what to do, and what to avoid, warning them also in his own name of the apocryphal or heretical character of certain books which, as he thinks, ought not to be admitted into the sacred canon.

We here learn a lesson, which is confirmed by the study of other religions, that canonical books, though they furnish in most cases the most ancient and most authentic information within the reach of the student of religion, are not to be trusted implicitly, nay, that they must be submitted to a more searching criticism and to more stringent tests than any other historical books. For that purpose the Science of Language has proved in many cases a most valuable auxiliary. It is not easy to imitate ancient language so as to deceive the practised eye of the grammarian, even if it

were possible to imitate ancient thought that should not betray to the historian its modern origin. A forged book, like the Ezour-veda, which deceived even Voltaire, and was published by him as 'the most precious gift for which the West was indebted to the East,' could hardly impose again on any Sanskrit scholar of the present day. This most precious gift from the East to the West, is about the silliest book that can be read by the student of religion, and all one can say in its defence is that the original writer never meant it as a forgery, never intended it for the purpose for which it was used by Voltaire. I may add that a book which has lately attracted considerable attention, *La Bible dans l'Inde*, by M. Jacolliot, belongs to the same class of books. Though the passages from the sacred books of the Brahmans are not given in the original, but only in a very poetical French translation, no Sanskrit scholar would hesitate for one moment to say that they are forgeries, and that M. Jacolliot, the President of the Court of Justice at Chandernagore, has been deceived by his native teacher. We find many childish and foolish

things in the Veda, but when we read the following line, as an extract from the Veda:

'La femme c'est l'âme de l'humanité,—'

it is not difficult to see that this is the folly of the nineteenth century, and not of the childhood of the human race. M. Jacolliot's conclusions and theories are such as might be expected from his materials.

With all the genuine documents for studying the history of the religions of mankind that have lately been brought to light, and with the great facilities which a more extensive study of Oriental languages has afforded to scholars at large for investigating the deepest springs of religious thought all over the world, a comparative study of religions has become a necessity. If we were to shrink from it, other nations and other creeds would take up the work. A lecture was lately delivered at Calcutta, by the minister of the Ādi-Samāj (i. e. the Old Church), 'On the Superiority of Hinduism to every other existing Religion.' The lecturer held that Hinduism was superior to all other religions, 'because it owed its name to no man; because it acknowledged

no mediator between God and man; because the Hindu worships God, in the intensely devotional sense, as the soul of the soul; because the Hindu alone can worship God at all times, in business and pleasure, and everything; because, while other Scriptures inculcate the practice of piety and virtue for the sake of eternal happiness, the Hindu Scriptures alone maintain that God should be worshipped for the sake of God alone, and virtue practised for the sake of virtue alone; because Hinduism inculcates universal benevolence, while other faiths merely refer to man; because Hinduism is non-sectarian (believing that all faiths are good if the men who hold them are good), non-proselytizing, pre-eminently tolerant, devotional to an entire abstraction of the mind from time and sense, and the concentration of it on the Divine; of an antiquity running back to the infancy of the human race, and from that time till now influencing in all particulars the greatest affairs of the State and the most minute affairs of domestic life[1].'

A Science of Religion, based on an impartial and truly scientific comparison of all, or

[1] See Times, Oct. 27, 1872.

at all events, of the most important, religions of mankind, is now only a question of time. It is demanded by those whose voice cannot be disregarded. Its title, though implying as yet a promise rather than a fulfilment, has become more or less familiar in Germany, France, and America; its great problems have attracted the eyes of many inquirers, and its results have been anticipated either with fear or with delight. It becomes therefore the duty of those who have devoted their life to the study of the principal religions of the world in their original documents, and who value religion and reverence it in whatever form it may present itself, to take possession of this new territory in the name of true science, and thus to protect its sacred precincts from the inroads of those who think that they have a right to speak on the ancient religions of mankind, whether those of the Brahmans, the Zoroastrians, or Buddhists, or those of the Jews and Christians, without ever having taken the trouble of learning the languages in which their sacred books are written. What should we think of philosophers writing on the religion of Homer, without knowing Greek, or

on the religion of Moses, without knowing Hebrew?

I do not wonder at Mr. Matthew Arnold[1] speaking scornfully of *La Science des Religions*, and I fully agree with him that such statements as he quotes would take away the breath of a mere man of letters. But are these statements supported by the authority of any scholars? Has anybody who can read either the Vedas or the Old and New Testaments in the original ever maintained that 'the sacred theory of the Aryas passed into Palestine from Persia and India, and got possession of the founder of Christianity and of his greatest apostles, St. Paul and St. John; becoming more perfect, and returning more and more to its true character of a "transcendent metaphysic," as the doctors of the Christian Church developed it?' Has Colebrooke, or Lassen, or Burnouf, ever suggested 'that we Christians, who are Aryas, may have the satisfaction of thinking that the religion of Christ has not come to us from the Semites, and that it is in the hymns of the Veda and not in the Bible that we are to look for the primordial source

[1] Literature and Dogma, p. 117.

of any religion; that the theory of Christ is the theory of the Vedic Agni, or *fire;* that the Incarnation represents the Vedic solemnity of the production of *fire*, symbol of fire of every kind, of all movement, life, and thought; that the Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit is the Vedic Trinity of Sun, Fire, and Wind; and God finally a cosmic unity.' Mr. Arnold quotes indeed the name of Burnouf, but he ought to have known that Eugène Burnouf has left no son and no successor.

Those who would use a comparative study of religions as a means for debasing Christianity by exalting the other religions of mankind, are to my mind as dangerous allies as those who think it necessary to debase all other religions in order to exalt Christianity. Science wants no partisans. I make no secret that true Christianity, I mean the religion of Christ, seems to me to become more and more exalted the more we know, and the more we appreciate the treasures of truth hidden in the despised religions of the world. But no one can honestly arrive at that conviction, unless he uses honestly the same measure for all religions. It would be fatal for any religion to claim an

exceptional treatment, most of all for Christianity. Christianity enjoyed no privileges and claimed no immunities when it boldly confronted and confounded the most ancient and the most powerful religions of the world. Even at present it craves no mercy, and it receives no mercy from those whom our missionaries have to meet face to face in every part of the world. Unless our religion has ceased to be what it was, its defenders should not shrink from this new trial of strength, but should encourage rather than depreciate the study of comparative theology.

And let me remark this, in the very beginning, that no other religion, with the exception, perhaps, of early Buddhism, would have favoured the idea of an impartial comparison of the principal religions of the world—would ever have tolerated our science. Nearly every religion seems to adopt the language of the Pharisee rather than of the Publican. It is Christianity alone which, as the religion of humanity, as the religion of no caste, of no chosen people, has taught us to study the history of mankind, as our own, to discover the traces of a divine wisdom and love in the

development of all the races of the world, and to recognise, if possible, even in the lowest and crudest forms of religious belief, not the work of the devil, but something that indicates a divine guidance, something that makes us perceive, with St. Peter, 'that God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.'

In no religion was there a soil so well prepared for the cultivation of Comparative Theology as in our own. The position which Christianity from the very beginning took up with regard to Judaism, served as the first lesson in comparative theology, and directed the attention even of the unlearned to a comparison of two religions, differing in their conception of the Deity, in their estimate of humanity, in their motives of morality, and in their hope of immortality, yet sharing so much in common that there are but few of the psalms and prayers in the Old Testament in which a Christian cannot heartily join even now, and but few rules of morality which he ought not even now to obey. If we have once learnt to see in the exclusive religion of the Jews

a preparation of what was to be the all-embracing religion of humanity, we shall feel much less difficulty in recognising in the mazes of other religions a hidden purpose; a wandering in the desert, it may be, but a preparation also for the land of promise.

A study of these two religions, the Jewish and the Christian, such as it has long been carried on by some of our most learned divines, simultaneously with the study of Greek and Roman mythology, has, in fact, served as a most useful preparation for wider inquiries. Even the mistakes that have been committed by earlier scholars have proved useful to those who followed after; and, once corrected, they are not likely to be committed again. The opinion, for instance, that the pagan religions were mere corruptions of the religion of the Old Testament, once supported by men of high authority and great learning, is now as completely surrendered as the attempts of explaining Greek and Latin as corruptions of Hebrew[1].

The theory again, that there was a primeval

[1] Tertullian, Apolog. xlvii: 'Unde haec, oro vos, philosophis aut poetis tam consimilia? Nonnisi de nostris sacramentis: si de nostris sacramentis, ut de prioribus,

preternatural revelation granted to the fathers of the human race, and that the grains of truth which catch our eye when exploring the temples of heathen idols, are the scattered fragments of that sacred heirloom,—the seeds that fell by the wayside or upon stony places—would find but few supporters at present; no more, in fact, than the theory that there was in the beginning one complete and perfect primeval language, broken up in later times into the numberless languages of the world.

Some other principles, too, have been established within this limited sphere by a comparison of Judaism and Christianity with the religions of Greece and Rome, which will prove extremely useful in guiding us in our own researches. It has been proved, for instance, that the language of antiquity is not like the language of our own times; that the language of the East is not like the language of the West; and that, unless we make allowance for this, we cannot but misinterpret the utterances of the most ancient teachers and poets

ergo fideliora sunt nostra magisque credenda, quorum imagines quoque fidem inveniunt.' See Hardwick, Christ and other Masters, vol. i. p. 17.

of the human race. The same words do not mean the same thing in Anglo-Saxon and English, in Latin and French: much less can we expect that the words of any modern language should be the exact equivalents of an ancient Semitic language, such as the Hebrew of the Old Testament.

Ancient words and ancient thoughts, for both go together, have in the Old Testament not yet arrived at that stage of abstraction in which, for instance, active powers, whether natural or supernatural, can be represented in any but a personal and more or less human form. When we speak of a temptation from within or from without, it was more natural for the ancients to speak of a tempter, whether in a human or in an animal form; when we speak of the ever-present help of God, they call the Lord their rock, and their fortress, their buckler, and their high tower. They even speak of 'the Rock that begat them' (Deut. xxxii. 18.), though in a very different sense from that in which Homer speaks of the rock from whence man has sprung. What with us is a heavenly message, or a godsend, was to them a winged messenger; what we

call divine guidance, they speak of as a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way, and a pillar of light to give them light; a refuge from the storm, and a shadow from the heat. What is really meant is no doubt the same, and the fault is ours, not theirs, if we wilfully misinterpret the language of ancient prophets, if we persist in understanding their words in their outward and material aspect only, and forget that before language had sanctioned a distinction between the concrete and the abstract, between the purely spiritual as opposed to the coarsely material, the intention of the speakers comprehended both the concrete and the abstract, both the material and the spiritual, in a manner which has become quite strange to us, though it lives on in the language of every true poet. Unless we make allowance for this mental parallax, all our readings in the ancient skies will be, and must be, erroneous. Nay, I believe it can be proved that more than half of the difficulties in the history of religious thought owe their origin to this constant misinterpretation of ancient language by modern language, of ancient thought by modern thought.

That much of what seems to us, and seemed to the best among the ancients, irrational and irreverent in the mythologies of India, Greece, and Italy can thus be removed, and that many of their childish fables can thus be read again in their original child-like sense, has been proved by the researches of Comparative Mythologists. The phase of language which gives rise, inevitably, we may say, to these misunderstandings, is earlier than the earliest literary documents. Its work in the Aryan languages was done before the time of the Veda, before the time of Homer, though its influence continues to be felt to a much later period.

Is it likely that the Semitic languages, and, more particularly, Hebrew, should, as by a miracle, have escaped the influence of a process which is inherent in the very nature and growth of language, which, in fact, may rightly be called an infantine disease, against which no precautions can be of any avail?

I believe that the Semitic languages, for reasons which I explained on a former occasion, have suffered less from mythology than the Aryan languages, yet we have only to read the first chapters of Genesis in order to con-

vince ourselves, that we shall never understand its ancient language rightly, unless we make allowance for the influence of ancient language on ancient thought. If we read, for instance, that after the first man was created, one of his ribs was taken out, and that rib made into a woman, every student of ancient language sees at once that this account must not be taken in its bare, literal sense. We need not dwell on the fact that in the first chapter of Genesis a far less startling account of the creation of man and woman had been given. What could be simpler, and therefore truer, than: 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.' The question then is, how, after this account of the creation of man and woman, could there be a second account of the creation of man, of his lone estate in the garden of Eden, and of the removal of one of his ribs, which was to be made into a help meet for him?

Those who are familiar with the genius of ancient Hebrew, can hardly hesitate as to the

original intention of such traditions. Let us remember that when we, in our modern languages, speak of the selfsame thing, the Hebrews speak of the bone (עֶצֶם), the Arabs of the eye of a thing. This is a well known Semitic idiom, and it is not without analogies in other languages. 'Bone' seemed a telling expression for what we should call the innermost essence; 'eye' for what we should call the soul or self of a thing. In the ancient hymns of the Veda, too, a poet asks: 'Who has seen the first-born, when he who had no *bones*, i.e. no form, bore him that had *bones*?' i.e. when that which was formless assumed form, or, it may be, when that which had no essence, received an essence? And he goes on to ask: 'Where was the life, the blood, the soul of the world? Who sent to ask this from any that knew it?' In the ancient language of the Veda, bone, blood, breath, are all meant to convey more than what we should call their material meaning; but in course of time, the Sanskrit *âtman*, meaning originally breath, dwindled away into a mere pronoun, and came to mean self. The same applies to the Hebrew *'etzem*. Originally meaning bone,

it came to be used at last as a mere pronominal adjective, in the sense of self or same.

After these preliminary explanations, we can well understand that, while if speaking and thinking in a modern language Adam might have been made to say to Eve, 'Thou art the same as I am,' such a thought would in ancient Hebrew be expressed by: 'Thou art bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.' Let such an expression be repeated for a few generations only, and a literal, that is to say, a material and deceptive interpretation, would soon spring up, and people would at last bring themselves to believe that the first woman was formed from the bone of the first man, or from a rib, for the simple reason, it may be, because it could better be spared than any other bone. Such a misunderstanding, once established, retained its place on account of its very strangeness, for a taste for the unintelligible springs up at a very early time, and threatens to destroy among ancient nations the power of appreciating whatever is simple, natural, and wholesome. Thus only can it be explained that the account of the creation of the woman obtained its place in the second chapter, though in clear opposition

to what had been said in the first chapter of Genesis[1].

It is not always possible to solve these ancient riddles, nor are the interpretations which have been attempted by various scholars always right. The only principle I stand up for is this, that misunderstandings of this kind are inevitable in ancient languages, and that we must be prepared to meet with them in the religions of the Semitic as well as of the Aryan nations.

Let us take another Semitic religion, the ancient religion of Babylon, as described to us in the fragments of Berosus. The similarities between that religion and the religion of the Jews are not to be mistaken, but such is the contrast between the simplicity of the Bible language and the wild extravagance of the Babylonian theogonies, that it requires some courage to guess at the original outlines behind the distorted features of a hideous caricature[2].

We have no reason to doubt the accuracy of Berosus in describing the religion of the Babylonians, at least for the time in which he lived. He was a Babylonian by birth, a

[1] Waitz. [2] Bunsen, Egypt, iv, p. 364.

priest of the temple of Belus, a contemporary of Alexander the Great. He wrote the History of the Chaldaeans, in Greek, evidently intending it to be read by the Greek conquerors, and he states in his first book that he composed it from the registers, astronomical and chronological, which were preserved at Babylon, and which comprised a period of 200,000 years (150,000, according to the Syncellus). The history of Berosus is lost. Extracts from it had been made by Alexander Polyhistor, in the first century before our era; but his work too is lost. It still existed, however, at the time when Eusebius (270–340) wrote his Chronicon, and was used by him in describing the ancient history of Babylon. But the Chronicle of Eusebius, too, is lost, at least in Greek, and it is only in an Armenian translation of Eusebius that many of the passages have been preserved to us, which refer to the history of Babylon, as originally described by Berosus. This Armenian translation was published in 1818, and its importance was first pointed out by Niebuhr[1]. As we possess large extracts

[1] Eusebii Pamphili Caesariensis Episcopi Chronicon Bipartitum, nunc primum ex Armeniaco textu in Latinum conversum, opera P. Jo. B. Aucher; Venetiis, 1818.

from Eusebius, preserved by Georgius the Syncellus, i. e. the concellaneus, or cell-companion, the Vice-patriarch of Constantinople, who wrote a Chronography about 800 A.D., it is possible in several places to compare the original Greek text with the Armenian, and thus to establish the trustworthiness of the Armenian translation.

Berosus thus describes the Babylonian traditions of the creation[1]:

'There was a time in which all was darkness and water, and in these were generated monstrous creatures, having mixed forms; men were born with two and some with four wings, with two faces, having one body, but two heads, a man's and a woman's, and bearing the marks of male and female nature; and other men with the legs and horns of goats, or with horses' feet, and having the hind quarters of horses, but the fore part of men, being in fact like Hippocentaurs. Bulls also were produced having human heads, and dogs with four bodies, having fishes' tails springing from their

[1] Eusebii Chronicon, vol. i. p. 22. Fragmenta Historicorum, vol. ii. p. 497.

hinder parts; and horses with dogs' heads, and men and other creatures, having heads and bodies of horses, but tails of fishes; and other creatures having the shape of all sorts of beasts. Besides these, fishes, and reptiles, and snakes and many other wonderful beings, differing from each other in appearance, the images of which are to be seen in the temple of Belus. At the head of all was a woman, called *Omorka* (Armen. *Marcaja*), which is said to be *Thalatth*[1] in Chaldean, and translated in Greek, *Thalassa* (or sea). When all these were thus together, *Belus* came and cut the woman in two: and one half of her he made the earth, and the other half the sky; and he destroyed all the creatures that were in her. But this account is to be understood allegorically. For when all was still moist, and creatures were born in it, then the god (Belus) cut off his own head, and the gods mixed the blood that flowed from it with the earth, and formed men; wherefore

[1] Mr. Sayce writes to me: 'Perhaps Lenormant is right in correcting Θαλάτθ (when compared with the Ταυθέ or Ταυθή of Damascius) into Θανάτθ, that is, the Assyrian *Tihamtu* or *Tamtu*, the sea, the Heb. תְּהוֹם. In this case the correspondence of the Babylonian account with Genesis i. 2 will be even greater.'

men are rational, and participate in the divine intelligence.'

'And Belus, whom they explain as Zeus (and the Armenians as Aramazd), cut the darkness in two, and separated earth and heaven from each other, and ordered the world. And animals which could not bear the power of the light, perished. And Belus when he saw a desert and fertile land, commanded one of the gods to cut off his head, to mix the earth with the blood flowing from it, and to form men and beasts that could bear the power of the light. And Belus established also the stars, and the sun, and the moon, and the five planets.'

Nothing can be at first sight more senseless and confused than this Babylonian version of the genesis of the earth and of man; yet, if we examine it more carefully, we can still distinguish the following elements:

1. In the beginning there was darkness and water.

In Hebrew: Darkness was upon the face of the deep.

2. The heaven was divided from the earth.

In Hebrew: Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the

waters from the waters . . . . . And God called the firmament Heaven ; . . . . and God called the dry land Earth.

3. The stars were made, and the sun and the moon, and the five planets.

In Hebrew : And God made two great lights ; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night ; he made the stars also.

4. Animals of various kinds were created.

5. Man was created.

It is in the creation of animals in particular that the extravagant imagination of the Babylonians finds its widest scope. It is said that the images of these creatures are to be seen in the temple of Belus, and as their description certainly agrees with some of the figures of gods and heroes that may now be seen in the British Museum, it is not unlikely that the Babylonian story of the creation of these winged monsters may have arisen from the contemplation of the ancient idols in the temples of Babylon. But this would still leave the original conception of such monsters unexplained.

The most important point, however, is this, that the Babylonians represented man as participating in divine intelligence. The symbolical

language in which they express this idea is no doubt horrible and disgusting, but let us recollect that the Hebrew symbol, too, 'that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life,' is after all but another weak attempt at expressing the same idea,—an idea so exalted that no language can ever express it without loss or injury.

In order to guess with some hope of success at the original meaning of ancient traditions, it is absolutely necessary that we should be familiar with the genius of the language in which such traditions took their origin. Languages, for instance, which do not denote grammatical gender, will be free from many mythological stories which in Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin are inevitable. Dr. Bleek, the indefatigable student of African languages, has frequently dwelt on this fact. In the Preface to his Comparative Grammar of the South-African Languages, published in 1862, he says:

'The forms of a language may be said to constitute in some degree the skeleton frame of the human mind whose thoughts they express . . . . How dependent, for example, the highest products of the human mind, the religious

ideas and conceptions of even highly civilized nations, may be upon this manner of speaking has been shown by Max Müller, in his essay on Comparative Mythology (Oxford Essays, 1856)[1]. This will become still more evident from our African researches. The primary cause of the ancestor worship of the one race (Kafirs, Negroes, and Polynesians), and of the sidereal worship, or of those forms of religion which have sprung from the veneration of heavenly bodies, of the other (Hottentots, North-African, Semitic, and Aryan nations), is supplied by the very forms of their languages. The nations speaking Sex-denoting languages are distinguished by a higher poetical conception, by which human agency is transferred to other beings, and even to animate things, in consequence of which their personification takes place, forming the origin of almost all mythological legends. This faculty is not developed in the Kafir mind, because not suggested by the form of their language, in which the nouns of persons are not (as in the Sex-denoting languages) thrown together with those of inanimate beings into the same classes or genders,

[1] Chips from a German Workshop, vol. ii. pp. 1–146.

but are in separate classes, without any grammatical distinction of sex[1].'

If therefore, without possessing a knowledge of the Zulu language, I venture on an interpretation of an account of creation that has sprung up in the thought and language of the Zulus, I do so with great hesitation, and only in order to show, by one instance at least, that the religions of savages, too, will have to submit hereafter to the same treatment which we apply to the sacred traditions of the Semitic and Aryan nations. I should not be at all surprised if the tentative interpretation which I venture to propose, were proved to be untenable by those who have studied the Zulu dialects, and I shall be much more ready to surrender my interpretation, than to lose the conviction that there is no solid foundation for the study of the religions of savages except the study of their languages.

[1] See also his Preface to the second volume of the Comparative Grammar, published 1869. Mr. E. B. Tylor has some valuable remarks on the same subject, in his article on the Religion of Savages, in the Fortnightly Review, 1866, p. 80; but, not admitting the identity of language and thought, he thinks that the simple anthropomorphic view is the fundamental principle of mythology, and that 'the disease of language' comes in at a later period only.

How impossible it is to arrive at anything like a correct understanding of the religious sentiments of savage tribes without an accurate and scholarlike knowledge of their dialects, is best shown by the old controversy whether there are any tribes of human beings entirely devoid of religious sentiments or no. Those who, for some reason or other, hold that religious sentiments are not essential to human nature, find little difficulty in collecting statements of travellers and missionaries in support of their theory. Those who hold the opposite opinion find no more difficulty in rebutting such statements[1]. Now the real point to settle before we adopt the one or the other view is, what kind of authority can be claimed by those whose opinions we quote; did they really know the language, and did they know it, not only sufficiently well to converse on ordinary subjects, but to enter into a friendly and unreserved conversation on topics on which even highly educated people are so apt to misunderstand each other? We want informants, in fact, like Dr. Callaway, Dr. Bleek, men who are

[1] See Schelling, Werke, vol. i. p. 72; and Mr. E. B. Tylor's reply to Sir John Lubbock, Primitive Culture, vol. i. p. 381.

both scholars and philosophers. Savages are shy and silent in the presence of white men, and they have a superstitious reluctance against mentioning even the names of their gods and heroes. Not many years ago it was supposed, on what would seem to be good authority, that the Zulus had no religious ideas at all; at present our very Bishops have been silenced by their theological inquiries.

Captain Gardiner, in his Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country undertaken in 1835, gives the following dialogue:

'Have you any knowledge of the power by whom the world was made? When you see the sun rising and setting, and the trees growing, do you know who made them and who governs them?'

Tpai, a Zulu (after a little pause, apparently deep in thought),—'No; we see them, but cannot tell how they come; we suppose that they come of themselves.'

A. 'To whom then do you attribute your success or failure in war?'

Tpai. 'When we are not successful, and do not take cattle, we think that our father (*Itongo*) has not looked upon us.'

A. 'Do you think your father's spirits (*Amatongo*) made the world?'

Tpai. 'No.'

A. 'Where do you suppose the spirit of man goes after it leaves the body?'

Tpai. 'We cannot tell.'

A. 'Do you think it lives for ever?'

Tpai. 'That we cannot tell; we believe that the spirit of our forefathers looks upon us when we go to war; but we do not think about it at any other time.'

A. 'You admit that you cannot control the sun or the moon, or even make a hair of your head to grow. Have you no idea of any power capable of doing this?'

Tpai. 'No; we know of none: we know that we cannot do these things, and we suppose that they come of themselves.'

It would be impossible to find a deeper shade of religious darkness than is pictured in this dialogue. But now let us hear the account which the Rev. Dr. Callaway[1] gives of the fundamental religious notions which he, after a long residence among the various clans of the Zulus, after acquiring an intimate know-

[1] Dr. Callaway, Unkulunkulu, p. 54.

ledge of their language, and, what is still more important, after gaining their confidence, was able to extract from their old men and women. They all believe, first of all, in an ancestor of each particular family and clan, and also in a common ancestor of the whole race of man. That ancestor is generally called the Unkulunkulu, which means the great-great-grandfather[1]. When pressed as to the father of this great-great-grandfather the general answer of the Zulus seems to be that he 'branched off from a reed,' or that he 'came from a bed of reeds.'

Here, I cannot help suspecting that language has been at work spinning mythology. In Sanskrit the word (parvan) which means originally a knot or joint in a cane, comes to mean a link, a member; and, transferred to a family, it expresses the different shoots and scions that spring from the original stem. The name for stem or race and lineage in Sanskrit is va*ms*a, which originally means a reed, a bamboo-cane. In the Zulu language a reed is called uthlanga, strictly speaking a reed which is capable of

[1] Dr. Callaway, Unkulunkulu, p. 48.

throwing out offshoots[1]. It comes thus metaphorically to mean a source of being. A father is the uthlanga of his children, who are supposed to have branched off from him. Whatever notions the ignorant of the present day among the natives may have of the meaning of this tradition, so much seems to be generally admitted, even among Zulus, that originally it could not have been intended to teach that men sprang from a real reed. 'It cannot be doubted,' Dr. Callaway writes, 'that the word alone has come down to the people, whilst the meaning has been lost.'

The interpretation which I venture to propose of this Zulu mythe is this:—The Zulus may have said originally that they were all offshoots of a reed, using reed in the same sense in which it is used in Sanskrit, and meaning therefore no more than that they all were children of one father, members of one race. The word for reed being uthlanga, Uthlanga was personified, and thus became the mythical ancestor of the human race. Among tribes where Unkulunkulu was the first man, Uthlanga became the first woman (p. 58).

[1] Dr. Callaway, Unkulunkulu, p. 2, note.

Every nation, every clan, every family requires sooner or later an ancestor. Even in comparatively modern times the Britons, or the inhabitants of Great Britain, were persuaded that it was not good to be without an ancestor, and that they might claim descent from Brutus. In the same manner the Hellenes, or the ancient inhabitants of Hellas, claimed descent from Hellen. The name of Hellenes, originally restricted to a tribe living in Thessaly[1], became in time the name of the whole nation[2], and hence it was but natural that *Aeolos*, the ancestor of the Aeolians, *Doros*, the ancestor of the Dorians, and *Xuthos*, the father of Achaeos and Ion, should all be represented as the sons of Hellen. So far all is intelligible, if we will only remember that this is the technical language of the heraldic office of ancient Greece.

But very soon the question arose, who was the father of Hellen, the ancestor of the Greeks, or, according to the intellectual horizon of the ancient Greeks, of the whole human race? If he was the ancestor of the whole human race, or the first man, he could only be the son of Zeus, the supreme god, and thus we find that

[1] Hom. Il. 2, 684.

[2] Thucyd. i. 3.

Hellen is called the son of Zeus by some authorities. Others, however, give a different account. There was in Greece, as in many countries, the tradition of a general deluge by which every living being had been destroyed, except a few who escaped in a boat, and who, after the flood had subsided, repeopled the earth. The person thus saved, according to Greek traditions, was *Deukalion*, the ruler of Thessaly, the son of Prometheus. Prometheus had told him to build a ship and furnish it with provisions, and when the flood came, he and his wife Pyrrha were the only people who escaped.

Thus it will be seen that the Greeks had really two ancestors of the human race, both Hellen and Deukalion, and in order to remove this difficulty, nothing remained but to make Hellen the son of Deukalion. All this is perfectly natural and intelligible, if we will only learn to speak, and not only to speak, but also to think the language of the ancient world.

The story then goes on to explain how Deukalion became the father of all the people on earth; that he and his wife Pyrrha were told to throw stones (or the bones of the earth) backward behind them, and that these stones

became men and women. Now here we have clearly a mythe or a miracle,—a miracle, too, without any justification, for if Pyrrha was the wife of Deukalion, why should not Hellen be their son? All becomes clear, if we look at the language in which the story is told. Pyrrha means the Red, and was originally a name for earth. As the Hellenes claimed to be indigenous or autochthonic, born of the earth where they lived, Pyrrha, the red Earth, was naturally called their mother, and being the mother of the Hellenes, she must needs be made the wife of Deukalion, the father of the Hellenes. Originally, however, Deukalion, like Manu in India, was represented as having alone escaped from the deluge, and hence the problem how, without a wife, he could have become the father of the people? It was in this perplexity, no doubt, that the mythe arose of his throwing stones behind him, and these stones becoming the new population of the earth. The Greek word for people was λαός, that for stones λᾶες;—hence what could be more natural, when children asked, whence the λαός or the people of Deukalion came, than to say that they came from λᾶες or stones?

I might give many more instances of the same kind, all showing that there was a meaning in the most meaningless traditions of antiquity, all showing, what is still more important, that these traditions, many of them in their present state absurd and repulsive, regain a simple, intelligible, and even beautiful character if we divest them of the crust which language in its inevitable decay has formed around them. We never lose, we always gain, when we discover the most ancient intention of sacred traditions, instead of being satisfied with their later aspect, and their modern misinterpretations.

Have we lost anything if, while reading the story of Hephaestos splitting open with his axe the head of Zeus, and Athene springing from it, full armed, we perceive behind this savage imagery, Zeus as the bright Sky, his forehead as the East, Hephaestos as the young, not yet risen Sun, and Athene as the Dawn, the daughter of the Sky, stepping forth from the fountain-head of light—

Γλαυκῶπις, with eyes like an owl (and beautiful they are);

Παρθένος, pure as a virgin;

Χρύσεα, the golden;

Ἀκρία, lighting up the tops of the mountains, and her own glorious Parthenon in her own favourite town of Athens;

Παλλάς, whirling the shafts of light;

Ἀλέα, the genial warmth of the morning;

Πρόμαχος, the foremost champion in the battle between night and day;

Πάνοπλος, in full armour, in her panoply of light, driving away the darkness of night, and awakening men to a bright life, to bright thoughts, to bright endeavours.

Would the Greeks have had less reverence for their gods if, instead of believing that Apollon and Artemis murdered the twelve children of Niobe, they had perceived that Niobe was, in a former period of language, a name of snow and winter, and that no more was intended by the ancient poet than that Apollon and Artemis, the vernal deities, must slay every year with their darts the brilliant and beautiful, but doomed children of the Snow? Is it not something worth knowing, worth knowing even to us after the lapse of four or five thousand years, that before the separation of the Aryan race, before the existence of Sanskrit, Greek, or Latin, before the

gods of the Veda had been worshipped, and before there was a sanctuary of Zeus among the sacred oaks of Dodona, one supreme Deity had been found, had been named, had been invoked by the ancestors of our race, and had been invoked by a name which has never been excelled by any other name, Dyaus, Zeus, Jupiter, Tyr,—all meaning light and brightness, sky and day?

No, if a critical examination of the ancient language of our own religion leads to no worse results than those which have followed from a careful interpretation of the petrified language of ancient India and Greece, we need not fear; we shall be gainers, not losers. Like an old precious medal, the ancient religion, after the rust of ages has been removed, will come out in all its purity and brightness: and the image which it discloses will be the image of the Father, the Father of all the nations upon earth; and the superscription, when we can read it again, will be, not in Judæa only, but in the languages of all the races of the world, the Word of God, revealed, where alone it can be revealed,—revealed in the heart of man.

APPENDIX TO LECTURE I.

As the Emperor Akbar may be considered the first who ventured on a comparative study of the religions of the world, the following extracts from the Ain i Akbari, the Muntakhab at Tawarikh, and the Dabistán, may be of interest at the present moment. They are taken from Dr. Blochmann's new translation of the Ain i Akbari, lately published at Calcutta, a most valuable contribution to the 'Bibliotheca Indica.' It is but seldom that we find in Eastern history an opportunity of confronting two independent witnesses, particularly contemporary witnesses, expressing the opinion of a still reigning Emperor. Abulfazl, the author of the Ain i Akbari, writes as the professed friend of Akbar, whose Vizier he was; Badáoní writes as the declared enemy of Abulfazl, and with an undisguised horror at Akbar's religious views. His work, the Muntakhab at Tawarikh, was kept secret, and

was not published till the reign of Jahángír. (Ain i Akbari, transl. by Blochmann, p. 104, note).

I first give some extracts from Abulfazl :—

A'I'N 77.

HIS MAJESTY AS THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE OF THE PEOPLE.

GOD, the Giver of intellect and the Creator of matter, forms mankind as He pleases, and gives to some comprehensiveness, and to others narrowness of disposition. Hence the origin of two opposite tendencies among men, one class of whom turn to religious (*dín*), and the other class to worldly thoughts (*dunyá*). Each of these two divisions select different leaders[1], and mutual repulsiveness grows to open rupture. It is then that men's blindness and silliness appear in their true light; it is then discovered how rarely mutual regard and charity are to be met with.

But have the religious and the worldly tendencies of men no common ground? Is there not everywhere the same enrapturing beauty[2] which beams forth

[1] As prophets, the leaders of the Church; and kings, the leaders of the State.

[2] God. He may be worshipped by the meditative, and by the active man. The former speculates on the essence of God, the latter rejoices in the beauty of the world, and does his duty as man. Both represent tendencies apparently antagonistic; but as both strive after God, there is a ground common to both. Hence mankind ought to learn that there is no real antagonism between *dín* and *dunyá*. Let men rally round Akbar, who joins Çufic depth to practical wisdom. By his example, he

from so many thousand hidden places? Broad indeed is the carpet[1] which God has spread, and beautiful the colours which He has given it.

The Lover and the Beloved are in reality one[2];
Idle talkers speak of the Brahmin as distinct from his idol.
There is but one lamp in this house, in the rays of which,
Wherever I look, a bright assembly meets me.

One man thinks that by keeping his passions in subjection he worships God; and another finds self-discipline in watching over the destinies of a nation. The religion of thousand others consists in clinging to an idea: they are happy in their sloth and unfitness of judging for themselves. But when the time of reflection comes, and men shake off the prejudices of their education, the threads of the web of religious blindness[3] break, and the eye sees the glory of harmoniousness.

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teaches men how to adore God in doing one's duties; his superhuman knowledge proves that the light of God dwells in him. The surest way of pleasing God is to obey the king.

[1] The world.

[2] These Ṣufic lines illustrate the idea that 'the same enrapturing beauty' is everywhere. God is everywhere, in everything: hence everything is God. Thus God, the Beloved, dwells in man, the lover, and both are one. Brahmin = man; the idol = God; lamp = thought of God: house = man's heart. The thoughtful man sees everywhere 'the bright assemblage of God's works.'

[3] The text has *taqlid*, which means *to put a collar on one's own neck*, to follow another blindly, especially in religious matters. 'All things which refer to prophetship and revealed religion they [Abulfazl, Ḥakim Abulfath, &c.] called *taqlidiyát*, i.e. things against reason, because they

But the ray of such wisdom does not light up every house, nor could every heart bear such knowledge. Again, although some are enlightened, many would observe silence from fear of fanatics, who lust for blood, but look like men. And should any one muster sufficient courage, and openly proclaim his enlightened thoughts, pious simpletons would call him a mad man, and throw him aside as of no account, whilst ill-stared wretches would at once think of heresy and atheism, and go about with the intention of killing him.

Whenever, from lucky circumstances, the time arrives that a nation learns to understand how to worship truth, the people will naturally look to their king, on account of the high position which he occupies, and expect him to be their spiritual leader as well: for a king possesses, independent of men, the ray of Divine wisdom, which banishes from his heart everything that is conflicting. A king will therefore sometimes observe the element of harmony in a multitude of things, or sometimes, reversely, a multitude of things in that which is apparently one; for he sits on the throne of distinction, and is thus equally removed from joy or sorrow.

Now this is the case with the monarch of the present age, and this book is a witness of it.

Men versed in foretelling the future, knew this

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put the basis of religion upon reason, not testimony. Besides, there came [during A.H. 983, or A.D. 1575] a great number of Portuguese, from whom they likewise picked up doctrines justifiable by reasoning.' *Badáoní*, ii. p. 281.

when His Majesty was born[1], and together with all others that were cognizant of the secret, they have since been waiting in joyful expectation. His Majesty, however, wisely surrounded himself for a time with a veil, as if he were an outsider, or a stranger to their hopes. But can man counteract the will of God? His Majesty, at first, took all such by surprise as were wedded to the prejudices of the age; but he could not help revealing his intentions: they grew to maturity in spite of him, and are now fully known. He now is the spiritual guide of the nation, and sees in the performance of this duty a means of pleasing God. He has now opened the gate that leads to the right path, and satisfies the thirst of all that wander about panting for truth.

But whether he checks men in their desire of becoming disciples, or admits them at other times, he guides them in each case to the realm of bliss. Many sincere enquirers, from the mere light of his wisdom, or his holy breath, obtain a degree of awakening which other spiritual doctors could not produce by repeated fasting and prayers for forty

[1] This is an allusion to the wonderful event which happened at the birth of the emperor. Akbar spoke. 'From Mirzá Sháh Muhammad, called Ghaznín Khán, son of Sháh Beghkhán, who had the title of Daurán Khán, and was an Arghún by birth. The author heard him say at Láhor, in A.H. 1053, "I asked Nawáb 'Azíz Kokah, who has the title of Khán i A'zam whether the late emperor, like the Messiah, had really spoken with his august mother." He replied, "His mother told me, it was true."' *Dabistán ul Mazáhib*, Calcutta Edition, p. 390. Bombay edition, p. 260. The words which Christ spoke in the cradle, are given in the Qorán, Sur. 19, and in the spurious gospel of the *Infancy of Christ*, pp. 5, 111.

days. Numbers of those who have renounced the world, as *Sannásís, Jogís, Sevrás, Qalandars, Hakíms,* and *Çufís*, and thousands of such as follow worldly pursuits, as soldiers, tradespeople, mechanics, and husbandmen, have daily their eyes opened to insight, or have the light of their knowledge increased. Men of all nations, young and old, friends and strangers, the far and the near, look upon offering a vow to His Majesty as the means of solving all their difficulties, and bend down in worship on obtaining their desire. Others again, from the distance of their homes, or to avoid the crowds gathering at Court, offer their vows in secret, and pass their lives in grateful praises. But when His Majesty leaves Court, in order to settle the affairs of a province, to conquer a kingdom, or to enjoy the pleasures of the chase, there is not a hamlet, a town, or a city, that does not send forth crowds of men and women with vow-offerings in their hands, and prayers on their lips, touching the ground with their foreheads, praising the efficacy of their vows, or proclaiming the accounts of the spiritual assistance received. Other multitudes ask for lasting bliss, for an upright heart, for advice how best to act, for strength of the body, for enlightenment, for the birth of a son, the reunion of friends, a long life, increase of wealth, elevation in rank, and many other things. His Majesty, who knows what is really good, gives satisfactory answers to every one, and applies remedies to their religious perplexities. Not a day passes but people bring cups of water to him, beseeching him to breathe

upon it. He who reads the letters of the divine orders in the book of fate, on seeing the tidings of hope, takes the water with his blessed hands, places it in the rays of the world-illuminating sun, and fulfils the desire of the suppliant. Many sick people[1] of broken hopes, whose diseases the most eminent physicians pronounced incurable, have been restored to health by this divine means.

A more remarkable case is the following. A simple-minded recluse had cut off his tongue, and throwing it towards the threshold of the palace, said, 'If that certain blissful thought[2], which I just now have, has been put into my heart by God, my tongue will get well; for the sincerity of my belief must lead to a happy issue.' The day was not ended before he obtained his wish.

Those who are acquainted with the religious knowledge and the piety of His Majesty, will not attach any importance to some of his customs[3], remarkable

[1] 'He [Akbar] shewed himself every morning at a window, in front of which multitudes came and prostrated themselves; while women brought their sick infants for his benediction, and offered presents on their recovery.' From the account of the Goa Missionaries who came to Akbar in 1595, in *Murray's Discoveries in Asia*, ii. p. 96.

[2] His thought was this. If Akbar is a prophet, he must, from his supernatural wisdom, find out in what condition I am lying here.

[3] 'He [Akbar] shewed, besides, no partiality to the Mahometans; and when in straits for money, would even plunder the mosques to equip his cavalry. Yet there remained in the breast of the monarch a stronghold of idolatry, on which they [the Portuguese Missionaries] could never make any impression. Not only did he adore the sun, and make long prayers to it four times a day; he also held himself forth as an object of worship; and though exceedingly tolerant as to other modes of faith, never would admit of any encroachments on his own divinity.' *Murray's Discoveries*, ii. p. 95.

as they may appear at first; and those who know His Majesty's charity and love of justice, do not even see anything remarkable in them. In the magnanimity of his heart, he never thinks of his perfection, though he is the ornament of the world. Hence he even keeps back many who declare themselves willing to become his disciples. He often says, 'Why should I claim to guide men, before I myself am guided?' But when a novice bears on his forehead the sign of earnestness of purpose, and he be daily enquiring more and more, His Majesty accepts him, and admits him on a Sunday, when the world-illuminating sun is in its highest splendour. Notwithstanding every strictness and reluctance shewn by His Majesty in admitting novices, there are many thousands, men of all classes, who have cast over their shoulders the mantle of belief, and look upon their conversion to the New Faith as the means of obtaining every blessing.

At the above-mentioned time of everlasting auspiciousness, the novice with his turban in his hands, puts his head on the feet of His Majesty. This is symbolical[1], and expresses that the novice, guided by good fortune and the assistance of his good star, has cast aside[2] conceit and selfishness, the root of so many evils, offers his heart in worship, and now

[1] The text has *zabán i hál*, and a little lower down, *zabán i bezufáni*. *Záhan i hál*, or *symbolical* language, is opposed to *zabán i maqál*, spoken words.

[2] Or rather, *from his head*, as the text has, because the casting aside of selfishness is symbolically expressed by taking off the turban. To wear a turban is a distinction.

comes to enquire as to the means of obtaining everlasting life. His Majesty, the chosen one of God, then stretches out the hand of favour, raises up the suppliant, and replaces the turban on his head, meaning by these symbolical actions that he has raised up a man of pure intentions, who from seeming existence has now entered into real life. His Majesty then gives the novice the *Shaçt*[1], upon which is engraved 'the Great Name[2],' and His Majesty's symbolical motto, '*Alláhu Akbar.*' This teaches the novice the truth that

'*The pure Shaçt and the pure sight never err.*'

Seeing the wonderful habits of His Majesty, his sincere attendants are guided, as circumstances require it; and from the wise counsels they receive, they soon state their wishes openly. They learn to satisfy their thirst in the spring of divine favour, and gain for their wisdom and motives renewed light. Others, according to their capacities, are taught wisdom in excellent advices.

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[1] *Shaçt* means *aim*: secondly *anything round*, either a ring, or a thread, as the Brahminical thread. Here a ring seems to be meant. Or it may be the likeness of the emperor which, according to Badáoní, the members wore on their turbans.

[2] The *Great Name* is a name of God. 'Some say, it is the word *Allah*; others say, it is *çamad*, the eternal; others, *alhayy*, the living; others, *alqayyúm*, the everlasting; others, *arrahmán*, *arrahím*, the clement and merciful; others *almuhaimin*, the protector.' *Ghiás.* 'Qází Hamíduddín of Nágor says, 'the Great Name is the word *Hú*, or He (God), because it has a reference to God's nature, as it shows that He has no other at His side. Again, the word *hú* is a root, not a derivative. All epithets of God are contained in it.' *Kashfullughát.*

But it is impossible while speaking of other matters besides, to give a full account of the manner in which His Majesty teaches wisdom, heals dangerous diseases, and applies remedies for the severest sufferings. Should my occupations allow sufficient leisure, and should another term of life be granted me, it is my intention to lay before the world a separate volume on this subject.

In another part of his work Abulfazl writes (Book I, Ain 18, p. 48):

His Majesty maintains that it is a religious duty and divine praise to worship fire and light; surly, ignorant men consider it forgetfulness of the Almighty, and fire-worship. But the deep-sighted know better. . . . There can be nothing improper in the veneration of that exalted element which is the source of man's existence, and of the duration of life; nor should base thoughts enter such a matter. . . . If light and fire did not exist, we should be destitute of food and medicines; the power of sight would be of no avail to the eyes. The fire of the sun is the torch of God's sovereignty.

And again (Book I, Ain 72, p. 154):

Ardently feeling after God, and searching for truth, His Majesty exercises upon himself both inward and outward austerities, though he occasionally joins public worship, in order to hush the slandering tongues of the bigots of the present age. But the great object of his life is the acquisition of that sound

morality, the sublime loftiness of which captivates the hearts of thinking sages, and silences the taunts of zealots and sectarians.

The following is an account of Akbar's literary labours (Book I, Ain 34, p. 103):

His Majesty's library is divided into several parts; . . . prose books, poetical works, Hindi, Persian, Greek, Kashmirian, Arabic, are all separately placed. Experienced readers bring them daily and read them before His Majesty. He does not get tired of hearing a book over again, but listens to the reading of it with more interest.

Philologists are constantly engaged in translating Hindi, Greek, Arabic, and Persian books into other languages. Thus a part of the Zich i Jadíd i Mírzáí was translated under the superintendence of Amír Fathullah of Shiráz, and also the Kishnjóshí, the Gangádhar, the Mohesh Mahánand, from Hindi (Sanskrit) into Persian, according to the interpretation of the author of this book[1]. The Mahábhárat which belongs to the ancient books of Hindústán has likewise been translated, from Hindi into Persian, under the superintendence of Nagíb Khán, Mauláná 'Abdul Qádir of Badáon, and Shaik Sultán of Thanésar. . . . The same learned men translated

[1] This can hardly be quite right, for these names are the names of the assistants of Fathullah, viz. Kishan Jaïçí, Gangādhar, Mahaïś (Maheça), and Mahānand; see Garcin de Tassy, Histoire de la Littérature Hindouie.

into Persian the Rámáyan, likewise a book of ancient Hindustan, which contains the life of Rám Chandra, but is full of interesting points of philosophy. Hájí Ibráhím of Sirhind [2] translated into Persian the At'harban which, according to Hindús, is one of the four divine books. The Lílawatí, which is one of the most excellent works written by Indian mathematicians on Arithmetic, lost its Hindú veil, and received a Persian garb from the hand of my elder brother, Shaikh 'Abdul Faiz i Faizí. At the command of His Majesty, Mukammal Khán of Gujrát, translated into Persian the Tájak, a well known work on Astronomy. . . . The history of Kashmír, which extends over the last four thousand years, has been translated from Kashmirian into Persian by Mauláná Sháh Muhammad of Sháhábád. (It was rewritten by Badáoní in an easier style.) . . . The Haribans, a book containing the life of Krishna, was translated into Persian by Mauláná Sherí. By order of His Majesty, the author of this volume composed a new version of the Kalí'lah Damnah, and published it

[2] Badáoní says "that a learned Brahmin, Shaikh Bháwan, who had turned Muhammadan, was ordered to translate the Atharban for him, but that, as he could not translate all the passages, Shaikh Faizi and Hájí Ibráhím were commanded to translate the book. The latter, though willing, did not write anything. Among the precepts of the At'harban, there is one which says that no man will be saved unless he read a certain passage. This passage contains many times the letter l, and resembles very much our Lá illah illallah. Besides, I found that a Hindú, under certain conditions, may eat cow flesh; and another, that Hindús bury their dead, but do not burn them. With such passages the Shaikh used to defeat other Brahmins in argument; and they had in fact led him to embrace Islám. Let us praise God for his conversion."

under the title of 'Ayár Danish. . . . The Hindi story of the Love of Nal and Daman has been metrically translated by my brother, Shaikh Faizí.

We must now look at the other side of the picture, though, I confess, that even the hostile statements of Badáoní and his party only confirm the impression of Akbar's character produced by the friendly account of Abulfazl.

When speaking of Abulfazl, Badáoní says:

He lighted up the lamp of the *Çabáhís*, illustrating thereby the story of the man who, because he did not know what to do, took up a lamp in broad daylight, and representing himself as opposed to all sects, tied the girdle of infallibility round his waist, according to the saying, 'He who forms an opposition, gains power.' He laid before the emperor a commentary on the *A'yat ul-kursí*, which contained all subtleties of the Qorán; and though people said that it had been written by his father, Abulfazl was much praised. The numerical value of the letters in the words *Tafsír i Akbarí* (Akbar's commentary) gives the date of composition [983]. But the emperor praised it, chiefly because he expected to find in Abulfazl a man capable of teaching the Mullás a lesson, whose pride certainly resembles that of Pharaoh, though this expectation was opposed to the confidence which His Majesty had placed in me.

The reason of Abulfazl's opinionativeness and pretensions to infallibility was this. At the time when

it was customary to get hold of and kill such as tried to introduce innovations in religious matters (as had been the case with Mír Habshí and others), Shaikh 'Abdunnabí and Makhdúm ul mulk, and other learned men at court, unanimously represented to the emperor that Shaikh Mubárik also, in as far as he pretended to be *Mahdí*, belonged to the class of innovators, and was not only himself damned, but led others into damnation. Having obtained a sort of permission to remove him, they despatched police officers to bring him before the emperor. But when they found that the Shaikh, with his two sons, had concealed himself, they demolished the pulpit in his prayer-room. The Shaikh, at first, took refuge with Salím i Chishtí at Fathpúr, who then was in the height of his glory, and requested him to intercede for him. Shaikh Salím, however, sent him money by some of his disciples, and told him it would be better for him to go away to Gujrát. Seeing that Salím took no interest in him, Shaikh Mubárik applied to Mírzá 'Azíz Kokah [Akbar's foster-brother], who took occasion to praise to the emperor the Shaikh's learning and voluntary poverty, and the superior talents of his two sons, adding that Mubárik was a most trustworthy man, that he had never received lands as a present, and that he ['Azíz] could really not see why the Shaikh was so much persecuted. The emperor at last gave up all thoughts of killing the Shaikh. In a short time matters took a more favourable turn; and Abulfazl, when once in favour with the emperor (officious as he was, and

time-serving, openly faithless, continually studying His Majesty's whims, a flatterer beyond all bounds) took every opportunity of reviling in the most shameful way that sect whose labours and motives have been so little appreciated[1], and became the cause not only of the extirpation of these experienced people, but also of the ruin of all servants of God, especially of Shaikhs, pious men, of the helpless, and the orphans, whose livings and grants he cut down.

Then follows Badáoní's account of the origin of the religious and philosophical disputations at the emperor's court:

During the year 983 A.H., many places of worship were built at the command of His Majesty. The cause was this. For many years previous to 983, the emperor had gained in succession remarkable and decisive victories. The empire had grown in extent from day to day; everything turned out well, and no opponent was left in the whole world. His Majesty had thus leisure to come into nearer contact with ascetics and the disciples of the Mu'íniyyah sect, and passed much of his time in discussing the word of God (Qorán), and the word of the prophet (the *Hadís*, or Tradition). Questions of Çúfism, scientific discussions, inquiries into Philosophy and Law, were the order of the day. His Majesty passed whole nights

[1] Badáoní belonged to the believers in the approach of the Millennium. A few years later, Akbar used Mahdawí rumours for his own purposes; *vide* below. The extract shows that there existed, before 982,

in thoughts of God: he continually occupied himself with pronouncing the names *Yá hú* and *Yá hádí*, which had been mentioned to him[1], and his heart was full of reverence for Him who is the true Giver. From a feeling of thankfulness for his past successes, he would sit many a morning alone in prayer and melancholy, on a large flat stone of an old building which lay near the palace in a lonely spot, with his head bent over his chest, and gathering the bliss of early hours.

For these discussions, which were held every Thursday[2] night, His Majesty invited the Sayyids, Shaikhs, 'Ulamás, and grandees, by turn. But as the guests generally commenced to quarrel about their places, and the order of precedence, His Majesty ordered that the grandees should sit on the east side; the Sayyids on the west side; the 'Ulamás to the south; and the Shaikhs to the north. The emperor then used to go from one side to the other, and make his inquiries . . ., when all at once, one night, 'the vein of the neck of the 'Ulamás of the age swelled up,' and a horrid noise and confusion ensued. His Majesty got very angry at their rude behaviour, and said to me [Badáoní], 'In future report any of the 'Ulamás that

heretical innovators, whom the emperor allowed to be persecuted. Matters soon took a different turn.

[1] By some ascetic. *Yá hú* means O He (God), and *Yá hádí*, O Guide. The frequent repetition of such names is a means of knowledge. Some faqírs repeat them several thousand times during a night.

[2] The text has *Shab i Jum'ah*, the night of Friday; but as Muhammadans commence the day at sunset, it is our *Thursday* night.

cannot behave and talks nonsense, and I shall make him leave the hall.' I gently said to Áçaf Khán, 'If I were to carry out this order, most of the 'Ulamás would have to leave,' when His Majesty suddenly asked what I had said. On hearing my answer, he was highly pleased, and mentioned my remark to those sitting near him.

At one of the above-mentioned meetings, His Majesty asked how many *freeborn* women a man was legally allowed to marry (by *nikáh*). The lawyers answered that four was the limit fixed by the prophet. The emperor thereupon remarked that from the time he had come of age, he had not restricted himself to that number, and in justice to his wives, of whom he had a large number, both freeborn and slaves, he now wanted to know what remedy the law provided for his case. Most expressed their opinions, when the emperor remarked that Shaikh 'Abdunnabí had once told him that one of the Mujtahids had had as many as nine wives. Some of the 'Ulamás present replied that the Mujtahid alluded to was Ibn Abí Laila; and that some had even allowed eighteen from a too literal translation of the Qorán verse (Qor. Sur. IV. 3), 'Marry whatever women ye like, two and two[1],

[1] Thus they got 2 + 2, 3 + 3, 4 + 4 = 18. But the passage is usually translated, 'Marry whatever women ye like, two, or three, or four.' The Mujtahid who took nine unto himself, translated 'two + three + four,' = 9. The question of the emperor was most ticklish, because, if the lawyers adhered to the number four, which they could not well avoid, the *haṛámzádagí* of Akbar's *freeborn* princesses was acknowledged.

and three and three, and four and four;' but this was improper. His Majesty then sent a message to Shaikh 'Abdunnabí, who replied that he had merely wished to point out to Akbar that a difference of opinion existed on this point among lawyers, but that he had not given a *fatwa*, in order to legalize irregular marriage proceedings. This annoyed His Majesty very much. 'The Shaikh,' he said, 'told me at that time a very different thing from what he now tells me.' He never forgot this.

After much discussion on this point, the 'Ulamás, having collected every tradition on the subject, decreed, *first*, that by *Muť'ah* [not by *nikáh*] a man might marry any number of wives he pleased; and *secondly*, that *Muť'ah* marriages were allowed by Imám Málik. The Shí'ahs, as was well known, loved children born in *Muť'ah* wedlock more than those born by *nikáh* wives, contrary to the Sunnís and the Ahl i Jamá'at.

On the latter point also the discussion got rather lively, and I would refer the reader to my work entitled *Najáturrashíd*, in which the subject is briefly discussed. But to make things worse, Naqíb Khán fetched a copy of the *Muwaṭṭa* of Imám Málik, and pointed to a tradition in the book, which the Imám had cited as a proof against the legality of *Muť'ah* marriages.

Another night, Qázi Ya'qúb, Shaikh Abulfazl, Hájí Ibráhím, and a few others were invited to meet His Majesty in the house near the *Anúptaláo* tank. Shaikh Abulfazl had been selected as the opponent, and laid

before the emperor several traditions regarding *Mut'ah* marriages, which his father (Shaikh Mubárik) had collected, and the discussion commenced. His Majesty then asked me, what my opinion was on this subject. I said, 'The conclusion which must be drawn from so many contradictory traditions and sectarian customs, is this:—Imám Málik and the Shí'ahs are unanimous in looking upon *Mut'ah* marriages as legal; Imám Sháfi'í and the Great Imám (Hanífah) look upon *Mut'ah* marriages as illegal. But, should at any time a Qází of the Málikí sect decide that *Mut'ah* is legal, it is legal, according to the common belief, even for Sháfi'ís and Hanafís. Every other opinion on this subject is idle talk.' This pleased His Majesty very much.

The emperor then said, 'I herewith appoint the Málikí Qází Husain 'Arab as the Qází before whom I lay this case concerning my wives, and you, Ya'qúb, are from to-day suspended.' This was immediately obeyed, and Qází Hasan, on the spot, gave a decree which made *Mut'ah* marriages legal.

The veteran lawyers, as Makhdúm ul mulk, Qází Ya'qúb, and others, made very long faces at these proceedings.

This was the commencement of 'their sere and yellow leaf.'

The result was that, a few days later, Mauláná Jaláluddín of Multán, a profound and learned man, whose grant had been transferred, was ordered from Ágrah (to Fathpúr Síkrí,) and appointed Qází of the realm. Qází Ya'qúb was sent to Gaur as District Qází.

From this day henceforth, 'the road of opposition and difference in opinion' lay open, and remained so till His Majesty was appointed Mujtahid of the empire.

During this year [983], there arrived Hakím Abulfath, Hakím Humáyún (who subsequently changed his name to Humáyún Qulí, and lastly to Hakím Humám), and Núruddín, who as poet is known under the name of *Qarárí*. They were brothers, and came from Gílán, near the Caspian Sea. The eldest brother, whose manners and address were exceedingly winning, obtained in a short time great ascendency over the emperor; he flattered him openly, adapted himself to every change in the religious ideas of His Majesty, or even went in advance of them, and thus became in a short time, a most intimate friend of Akbar.

Soon after there came from Persia Mullá Muhammad of Yazd, who got the nickname of Yazídí, and attaching himself to the emperor, commenced openly to revile the *Çahábah* (persons who knew Muhammad, except the twelve Imáms), told queer stories about them, and tried hard to make the emperor a Shí'ah. But he was soon left behind by Bír Baṛ—that bastard! —and by Shaikh Abulfazl, and Hakím Abulfath, who successfully turned the emperor from the Islám, and led him to reject inspiration, prophetship, the miracles of the prophet and of the saints, and even the whole law, so that I could no longer bear their company.

At the same time, His Majesty ordered Qází Jalá-

luddín and several 'Ulamás to write a commentary on the Qorán; but this led to great rows among them.

Soon after, the observance of the five prayers and the fasts, and the belief in every thing connected with the prophet, were put down as *taqlídí*, or religious blindness, and man's reason was acknowledged to be the basis of all religion. Portuguese priests also came frequently; and His Majesty enquired into the articles of their belief which are based upon reason.

His Majesty till now [986] had shewn every sincerity, and was diligently searching for truth. But his education had been much neglected; and surrounded as he was by men of low and heretical principles, he had been forced to doubt the truth of the Islám. Falling from one perplexity into the other, he lost sight of his real object, the search of truth; and when the strong embankment of our clear law and our excellent faith had once been broken through, His Majesty grew colder and colder, till after the short space of five or six years not a trace of Muhammadan feeling was left in his heart. Matters then became very different.

The following are the principal reasons which led His Majesty from the right path. I shall not give all, but only some, according to the proverb, 'That which is small, guides to that which is great, and a sign of fear in a man points him out as the culprit.'

The principal reason is the large number of learned men of all denominations and sects that came from

various countries to court, and received personal interviews. Night and day people did nothing but enquire and investigate; profound points of science, the subtleties of revelation, the curiosities of history, the wonders of nature, of which large volumes could only give a summary abstract, were ever spoken of. His Majesty collected the opinions of every one, especially of such as were not Muhammadans, retaining whatever he approved of, and rejecting everything which was against his disposition, and ran counter to his wishes. From his earliest childhood to his manhood, and from his manhood to old age, His Majesty has passed through the most various phases, and through all sorts of religious practices and sectarian beliefs, and has collected everything which people can find in books, with a talent of selection peculiar to him, and a spirit of enquiry opposed to every [Islámitic] principle. Thus a faith based on some elementary principles traced itself on the mirror of his heart, and as the result of all the influences which were brought to bear on His Majesty, there grew gradually, as the outline on a stone, the conviction in his heart that there *were sensible men in all religions, and abstemious thinkers, and men endowed with miraculous powers, among all nations.* If some true knowledge was thus everywhere to be found, why should truth be confined to one religion, or to a creed like the Islám, which was comparatively new, and scarcely a thousand years old; why should one sect assert what another denies, and why should one claim a preference without having superiority conferred on itself?

Moreover Sumanís[1] and Brahmins managed to get frequent private interviews with His Majesty. As they surpass other learned men in their treatises on morals, and on physical and religious sciences, and reach a high degree in their knowledge of the future, in spiritual power and human perfection, they brought proofs, based on reason and testimony, for the truth of their own, and the fallacies of other religions, and inculcated their doctrines so firmly, and so skilfully represented things as quite self-evident which require consideration, that no man, by expressing his doubts, could now raise a doubt in His Majesty, even if mountains were to crumble to dust, or the heavens were to tear asunder.

Hence His Majesty cast aside the Islámitic revelations regarding resurrection, the day of judgment, and the details connected with it, as also all ordinances based on the tradition of our prophet. He listened to every abuse which the courtiers heaped on our glorious and pure faith, which can be so easily followed; and eagerly seizing such opportunities, he shewed in words and gestures, his satisfaction at the treatment which his original religion received at their hands.

How wise was the advice which the guardian gave a lovely being,

[1] Explained in Arab. Dictionaries as a sect in Sind who believe in the transmigration of souls (*tanásukh*). Akbar, as will be seen from the following, was convinced of the transmigration of souls, and therefore rejected the doctrine of resurrection.

[Is not Sumaní meant for Samana, i. e. *S*ramaṇa?—M. M.]

'Do not smile at every face, as the rose does at every zephyr[1].'
When it was too late to profit by the lesson,
She could but frown, and hang down the head.

For some time His Majesty called a Brahmin, whose name was Puzukhotam[2], author of a commentary on the . .[3], whom he asked to invent particular Sanskrit names for all things in existence. At other times, a Brahmin of the name of Debí was pulled up the wall of the castle[4], sitting on a *chárpái*, till he arrived near a balcony where the emperor used to sleep. Whilst thus suspended, he instructed His Majesty in the secrets and legends of Hinduism, in the manner of worshipping idols, the fire, the sun and stars, and of revering the chief gods of these unbelievers, as Brahma, Mahádev, Bishn, Kishn, Rám, and Mahámáí, who are supposed to have been men, but very likely never existed, though some, in their idle belief, look upon them as gods, and others as angels. His Majesty, on hearing further how much the people of the country prized their institutions, commenced to look upon them with affection. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls especially took a deep root in his heart, and he approved of the saying, 'There is no religion

[1] Just as Akbar liked the zephyr of enquiry into other religious systems. But zephyrs are also destructive: they scatter the petals of the rose.

[2] [Probably Purushottama.—M. M.]

[3] The text has a few unintelligible words.

[4] Perhaps in order not to get polluted, or because the balcony belonged to the Harem.

in which the doctrine of transmigration has not taken firm root.' Insincere flatterers composed treatises, in order to fix the evidence for this doctrine; and as His Majesty relished enquiries into the sects of these infidels (who cannot be counted, so numerous they are, and who have no end of revealed books, but nevertheless, do not belong to the *Ahl i Kitáb* (Jews, Christians, and Muhammadans), not a day passed, but a new fruit of this loathsome tree ripened into existence.

Sometimes again, it was *Shaikh Tájuddín* of Dihlí, who had to attend the emperor. This Shaikh is the son of Shaikh Zakariyá of Ajodhan. The principal 'Ulamás of the age call him *Tájul'árifín*, or crown of the Çúfís. He had learned under Shaikh Zamán of Pánípat, author of a commentary on the Lawáih, and of other very excellent works, was in Çúfism and pantheism second only to Shaikh Ibn 'Arabí, and had written a comprehensive commentary on the *Nuzhat ularwáh*. Like the preceding he was drawn up the wall of the castle. His Majesty listened whole nights to his Çúfic trifles. As the Shaikh was not overstrict[1] in acting according to our religious law, he spoke a great deal of the pantheistic presence, which idle Çúfís will talk about, and which generally leads them to denial of the law and open heresy. He also introduced polemic matters, as the ultimate salvation by

[1] As long as a Çúfí conforms to the Qorán, he is *shar'í*; but when he feels that he has drawn nearer to God, and does no longer require the ordinances of the *profanum vulgus*, he is *ázád*, free, and becomes a heretic.

faith of Pharaoh—God's curse be upon him!—which is mentioned in the *Fuçúç ulhikam*[1], or the excellence of hope over fear[2], and many other things to which men incline from weakness of disposition, unmindful of cogent reasons, or distinct religious commands, to the contrary. The Shaikh is therefore one of the principal culprits, who weakened His Majesty's faith in the orders of our religion. He also said that infidels would, of course, be kept for ever in hell, but it was not likely, nor could it be proved, *that the punishment in hell was eternal.* His explanation of some verses of the Qorán, or of the tradition of our prophet, were often far-fetched. Besides, he mentioned that the phrase *'Insán i kámil* (perfect man) referred to the ruler of the age, from which he inferred that the nature of a king was holy. In this way, he said many agreeable things to the emperor, rarely expressing the proper meaning, but rather the opposite of what he knew to be correct. Even the *sijdah* (prostration), which people mildly call *zamínbos* (kissing the ground), he allowed to be due to the Insán i kámil; he looked upon the respect due to the king as a religious command, and called the face of the king *Ka'bah i Murádát,* the sanctum of desires, and

[1] Pharaoh claimed divinity, and is therefore *mal'ún,* accursed by God. But according to some books, and among them the Fuçúç, Pharaoh repented in the moment of death, and acknowledged Moses a true prophet.

[2] The Islám says, *Alímán baina-l khaufi warrijá,* 'Faith stands *between* fear and hope.' Hence it is sin to fear God's wrath more than to hope for God's mercy; and so reversely.

Qiblah i Háját, the cynosure of necessities. Such blasphemies[1] other people supported by quoting stories of no credit, and by referring to the practice followed by disciples of some heads of Indian sects.

Learned monks also came from Europe, who go by the name of *Pádre*[2]. They have an infallible head, called *Pápá*. He can change any religious ordinances as he may think advisable, and kings have to submit to his authority. These monks brought the gospel, and mentioned to the emperor their proofs for the Trinity. His Majesty firmly believed in the truth of the Christian religion, and wishing to spread the doctrines of Jesus, ordered Prince Murád[3] to take a few lessons in Christianity by way of auspiciousness, and charged Abulfazl to translate the Gospel. Instead of the usual *Bismilláh-irrahmán-irrahím*[4], the following lines were used—

[1] As the *zamínbos*, or the use of holy names as *Ka'bah* (the temple at Makkah) or *qiblah* (Makkah, in as far as people turn to it their face when praying).

[2] Rodolpho Aquaviva, called by Abulfazl, Pádrí Radalf, Antonio de Monserrato, Francisco Enriques.

[3] Prince Murád was then about eight years old. Jahángír (Salím) was born on Wednesday, the 17th Rabí'ulawwal 977. Three months after him, his sister *Shahzádah Khánum* was born; and after her (perhaps in year the 978) *Sháh Murád*, who got the nickname of *Paháŕí*, as he was born in the hills of Fathpúr Síkrí. Dányál was born in Ajmír during the night between Tuesday and Wednesday, the 10th Jumádalawwal 979.

[4] The formula '*Bismilláh*, &c.' is said by every schoolboy before he commences to read from his text book.

The words *Ai nám i tu Jesus o Kiristo* are taken from the Dabistán; the edition of Badáoní has *Ai námí wai zhazho Kiristo*, which, though correct in metre (*vide* my 'Prosody of the Persians,' p. 33, No. 32), is

Ai nám i tu Jesus o Kiristo

(O thou whose names are Jesus and Christ)

which means, 'O thou whose name is gracious and blessed;' Shaikh Faizí added another half, in order to complete the verse

Subhánaka lá siwáka Yá hú.

(We praise Thee, there is no one besides Thee, O God!)

These accursed monks applied the description of cursed Satan, and of his qualities, to Muhammad, the best of all prophets—God's blessings rest on him and his whole house!—a thing which even devils would not do.

Bír Baṛ also impressed upon the emperor that the sun was the primary origin of every thing. The ripening of the grain on the fields, of fruits and vegetables, the illumination of the universe, and the lives of men, depended upon the sun. Hence it was but proper to worship and reverence this luminary; and people in praying should face towards the place where he rises, instead of turning to the quarter where he sets. For similar reasons, said Bír Baṛ, should men pay regard to fire and water, stones, trees, and other forms of existence, even to cows and their dung, to the mark on the forehead and the Brahminical thread.

Philosophers and learned men who had been at Court, but were in disgrace, made themselves busy in

improbable. The formula as given in the Dabistán has a common Masnawí metre (*vide* my 'Prosody,' p. 33, No. 31), and spells *Jesus* دیزز *dezuz*. The verse as given by H. Wilson (Works, ii. p. 387) has no metre.

bringing proofs. They said, the sun was 'the greatest light,' the origin of royal power.

Fire-worshippers also had come from Nausárí in Gujrát, and proved to His Majesty the truth of Zoroaster's doctrines. They called fire-worship 'the great worship,' and impressed the emperor so favourably, that he learned from them the religious terms and rites of the old Pársís, and ordered Abulfazl to make arrangements, that sacred fire should be kept burning at Court by day and by night, according to the custom of the ancient Persian kings, in whose fire-temples it had been continually burning; for fire was one of the manifestations of God, and 'a ray of His rays.'

His Majesty, from his youth, had also been accustomed to celebrate the *Hom* (a kind of fire-worship), from his affection towards the Hindu princesses of his Harem.

From the New Year's day of the twenty-fifth year of his reign [988], His Majesty openly worshipped the sun and the fire by prostrations; and the courtiers were ordered to rise, when the candles and lamps were lighted in the palace. On the festival of the eighth day of Virgo, he put on the mark on the forehead, like a Hindu, and appeared in the Audience Hall, when several Brahmins tied, by way of auspiciousness, a string with jewels on it round his hands, whilst the grandees countenanced these proceedings by bringing, according to their circumstances, pearls and jewels as presents. The custom of Rák'hí (or tying pieces of clothes round the wrists as amulets) became quite common.

When orders, in opposition to the Islám, were quoted by people of other religions, they were looked upon by His Majesty as convincing, whilst Hinduism is in reality a religion in which every order is nonsense. The Originator of our belief, the Arabian Saints, all were said to be adulterers, and highway robbers, and all the Muhammadans were declared worthy of reproof, till at length His Majesty belonged to those of whom the Qorán says (Sur. 61, 8): 'They seek to extinguish God's light with their mouths: but God will perfect his light, though the infidels be averse thereto.' In fact matters went so far, that proofs were no longer required when anything connected with the Islám was to be abolished.

After Makhdúm ul mulk and Shaikh 'Abdunnabí had left for Makkah (987), the emperor examined people about the creation of the Qorán, elicited their belief, or otherwise, in revelation, and raised doubts in them regarding all things connected with the prophet and the imáms. He distinctly denied the existence of *Jins*, of angels, and of all other beings of the invisible world, as well as the miracles of the prophet and the saints; he rejected the successive testimony of the witnesses of our faith, the proofs for the truths of the Qorán as far as they agree with man's reason, the existence of the soul after the dissolution of the body, and future rewards and punishments in as far as they differed from metempsychosis.

In this year, Shaikh Mubárik of Nágor said in the presence of the emperor of Bír Bar, 'Just as there are

interpolations in your holy books, so there are many in ours (Qorán); hence it is impossible to trust either.'

Some shameless and ill-starred wretches also asked His Majesty, why, at the approaching close of the Millennium, he did not make use of the sword, 'the most convincing proof,' as Sháh Ismá'il of Persia had done. But His Majesty, at last, was convinced that confidence in him as a leader was a matter of time and good counsel, and did not require the sword. And indeed, if His Majesty, in setting up his claims, and making his innovations, had spent a little money, he would have easily got most of the courtiers, and much more the vulgar, into his devilish nets.

At a council meeting for renovating the religion of the empire, Rájah Bhagawán said, 'I would willingly believe that Hindus and Musalmáns have each a bad religion; but only tell us where the new sect is, and what opinion they hold, so that I may believe.' His Majesty reflected a little, and ceased to urge the Rájah. But the alteration of the orders of our glorious faith was continued.

During those days also the public prayers and the *azán*, which was chanted five times a day for assembly to prayer in the statehall, were abolished. Names like *Ahmad*, *Muhammad*, *Muṣṭafa*, &c., became offensive to His Majesty, who thereby wished to please the infidels outside, and the princesses inside, the Harem, till, after some time, those courtiers who had such names, changed them; and names as *Yár Muhammad*, *Muhammad Khán*, were altered to *Rahmat*. To call such ill-starred wretches by the name of our

blessed prophet would indeed be wrong, and there was not only room for improvement by altering their names, but it was even necessary to change them, according to the proverb, 'It is wrong to put fine jewels on the neck of a pig.'

In *Rabí'ussání* 990, Mír Fathullah came from the Dak'hin. * * * * As he had been an immediate pupil of Mír Ghiásuddín Mançúr of Shíráz, who had not been overstrict in religious matters, His Majesty thought that Fathullah would only be too glad to enter into his religious scheme. But Fathullah was such a stanch Shí'ah, and at the same time such a worldly office-hunter, and such a worshipper of mammon and of the nobility, that he would not give up a jot of the tittles of bigotted Shí'ism. Even in the statehall he said, with the greatest composure, his Shí'ah prayers—a thing which no one else would have dared to do. His Majesty, therefore, put him among the class of the bigots; but he connived at his practices, because he thought it desirable to encourage a man of such attainments and practical knowledge. Once the emperor, in Fathullah's presence[1], said to Bír Bar, 'I really wonder how any one in his senses can believe that a man, whose body has a certain weight, could, in the space of a moment, leave his bed, go up to heaven, there have 90,000 conversations with God, and yet on his return

[1] As Fathullah was a good mechanic, Akbar thought that by referring to the weight of a man, and the following experiment with his foot, he would induce Fathullah to make a remark on the prophet's ascension (*mi'ráj*).

find his bed still warm?' So also was the splitting of the moon ridiculed. 'Why,' said His Majesty, lifting up one foot, 'it is really impossible for me to lift up the other foot! What silly stories men will believe.' And that wretch (Bír Baṛ) and some other wretches—whose names be forgotten—said, 'Yea, we believe! Yea, we trust!' This great foot-experiment was repeated over and over again. But Fathullah—His Majesty had been every moment looking at him, because he wanted him to say something; for he was a new-comer—looked straight before himself, and did not utter a syllable, though he was all ear.

Lastly, a few passages from the Dabistán.

Salámullah also said that God's Representative (Akbar) had often wept and said, 'O that my body were larger than all bodies together, so that the people of the world could feed on it without hurting other living animals!'

A sign of the sagacity of this king is this, that he employed in his service people of all classes, Jews, Persians, Túránís, &c., because one class of people, if employed to the exclusion of others, would cause rebellions, as in the case of the Uzbaks and Qizilbáshes (Persians), who used to dethrone their kings. Hence Sháh 'Abbás, son of Sulṭán Khudábandah i Çafawí, imitated the practice of Akbar, and favoured the Gurjís (Georgians). Akbar paid likewise no regard to hereditary power, or genealogy and fame, but favoured those whom he thought to excel in knowledge and manners.

SECOND LECTURE.

DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION,

FEBRUARY 26, 1870.

THERE is no lack of materials for the student of the Science of Religion. It is true that, compared with the number of languages which the comparative philologist has to deal with, the number of religions is small. In a comparative study of languages, however, we find most of our materials ready for use; we possess grammars and dictionaries, while it is difficult to say, where we are to look for the grammars and dictionaries of the principal religions of the world. Not in the catechisms, or the articles, not even in the so-called creeds [1]

[1] 'What are creeds? Skeletons, freezing abstractions, metaphysical expressions of unintelligible dogmas; and these I am to regard as the expositions of the fresh, living,

or confessions of faith which, if they do not give us an actual misrepresentation of the doctrines which they profess to epitomise, give us always the shadow only, and never the soul and substance of a religion. But how seldom do we find even such helps!

Among Eastern nations it is not unusual to distinguish between religions that are founded on a book, and others that have no such vouchers to produce. The former are considered more respectable, and, though they may contain false doctrine, they are looked upon as a kind of aristocracy among the vulgar and nondescript crowd of bookless or illiterate religions.

To the student of religion canonical books are, no doubt, of the utmost importance, but he ought never to forget that canonical books too give the reflected image only of the real doctrines of the founder of a new religion, an image always blurred and

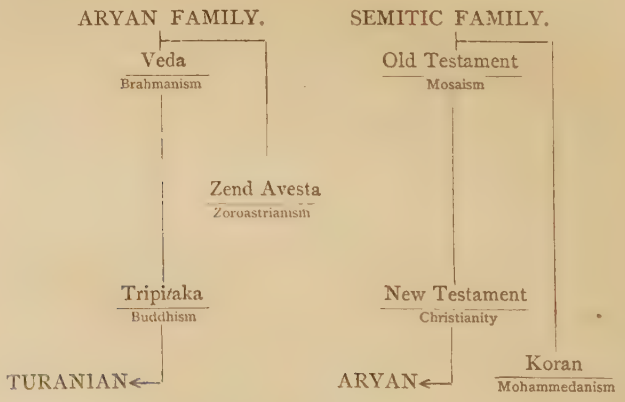
infinite truth which came from Jesus! I might with equal propriety be required to hear and receive the lispings of infancy as the expressions of wisdom. Creeds are to the Scriptures, what rushlights are to the sun.'—Dr. Channing, On Creeds.

distorted by the medium through which it had to pass. But how few are the religions which possess a sacred canon, how small is the aristocracy of real book-religions in the history of the world!

Let us look at the two races that have been the principal actors in that great drama which we call the history of the world, the *Aryan* and the *Semitic*, and we shall find that two members only of each race can claim the possession of a sacred code. Among the *Aryans*, the *Hindus* and the *Persians;* among the *Shemites*, the *Hebrews* and the *Arabs*. In the Aryan family the Hindus, in the Semitic family the Hebrews, have each produced two book-religions; the Hindus have given rise to Brahmanism and Buddhism; the Hebrews to Mosaism and Christianity. Nay, it is important to observe that in each family the third book-religion can hardly lay claim to an independent origin, but is only a weaker repetition of the first. Zoroastrianism has its sources in the same stratum which fed the deeper and broader stream of Vedic religion; Mohammedanism springs, as far as its most vital doctrines are concerned, from the ancient foun-

tain-head of the religion of Abraham, the worshipper and the friend of the one true God.

If you keep before your mind the following simple outline, you can see at one glance the river-system in which the religious thought of the Aryan and the Semitic nations has been running for centuries—of those, at least, who are in possession of sacred and canonical books.



While Buddhism is the direct offspring, and, at the same time, the antagonist of Brahmanism, Zoroastrianism is rather a deviation from the straight course of ancient Vedic faith, though it likewise contains a protest against some of the doctrines of the earliest worship-

pers of the Vedic gods. The same, or nearly the same relationship holds together the three principal religions of the Semitic stock, only that, chronologically, Mohammedanism is later than Christianity, while Zoroastrianism is earlier than Buddhism.

Observe also another, and, as we shall see, by no means accidental coincidence in the parallel ramifications of these two religious stems.

Buddhism, which is the offspring of, but at the same time marks a reaction against the ancient Brahmanism of India, withered away after a time on the soil from which it had sprung, and assumed its real importance only after it had been transplanted from India, and struck root among Turanian nations in the very centre of the Asiatic continent. Buddhism, being at its birth an Aryan religion, ended by becoming the principal religion of the Turanian world.

The same transference took place in the second stem. Christianity, being the offspring of Mosaism, was rejected by the Jews as Buddhism was by the Brahmans. It failed to fulfil its purpose as a mere reform of the ancient Jewish religion, and not till it had been

transferred from Semitic to Aryan ground, from the Jews to the Gentiles, did it develope its real nature and assume its world-wide importance. Having been at its birth a Semitic religion, it became the principal religion of the Aryan world.

There is one other nation only, outside the pale of the Aryan and Semitic families, which can claim one, or even two book-religions as its own. China became the mother, at almost the same time, of two religions, each founded on a sacred code—the religion of Confucius, (Kung Fu-tze, i. e. Kung, the Master,) and the religion of Lao-tse, the former resting on the Five King and the Four Shu, the latter on the Tao-te-king.

With these eight religions the library of the Sacred Books of the whole human race is complete, and an accurate study of these eight codes, written in Sanskrit, Pâli, and Zend, in Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic, lastly in Chinese, might in itself not seem too formidable an undertaking for a single scholar. Yet, let us begin at home, and look at the enormous literature devoted to the interpretation of the Old Testament, and the number of books pub-

lished every year on controverted points in the doctrine or the history of the Gospels, and you may then form an idea of what a theological library would be that should contain the necessary materials for an accurate and scholar-like interpretation of the eight sacred codes. Even in so modern, and, in the beginning, at least, so illiterate a religion as that of Mohammed, the sources that have to be consulted for the history of the faith during the early centuries of its growth are so abundant, that few critical scholars could master them in their completeness [1].

If we turn our eyes to the Aryan religions, the sacred writings of the Brahmans, in the narrowest acceptation of the word, might seem within easy grasp. The hymns of the Rig-

[1] Sprenger, Das Leben des Mohammed, vol. i. p. 9:—'Die Quellen, die ich benutzt habe, sind so zahlreich, und der Zustand der Gelehrsamkeit war unter den Moslimen in ihrer Urzeit von dem unsrigen so verschieden, dass die Materialien, die ich über die Quellen gesammelt habe, ein ziemlich beleibtes Bändchen bilden werden. Es ist in der That nothwendig, die Literaturgeschichte des Islâm der ersten zwei Jahrhunderte zu schreiben, um den Leser in den Stand zu setzen, den hier gesammelten kritischen Apparat zu benutzen. Ich gedenke die Resultate meiner Forschungen als ein separates Werkchen nach der Prophetenbiographie herauszugeben.'

veda, which are the real bible of the ancient faith of the Vedic Rishis, are only 1,028 in number, consisting of about 10,580 verses[1]. The commentary, however, on these hymns, of which I have published five good-sized quarto volumes, is estimated at 100,000 lines, consisting of 32 syllables each, that is at 3,200,000 syllables[2]. There are, besides, the three minor Vedas, the Yagurveda, the Sâmaveda, the Atharvaveda, which, though of less importance for religious doctrines, are indispensable for a right appreciation of the sacrificial and ceremonial system of the worshippers of the ancient Vedic gods.

To each of these four Vedas belong collections of so-called *Brâhmanas*, scholastic treatises of a later time, it is true, but nevertheless written in archaic Sanskrit, and reckoned by every orthodox Hindu as part of his revealed literature. Their bulk is much larger than that of the ancient Vedic hymn-books.

And all this constitutes the text only for numberless treatises, essays, manuals, glosses,

[1] Max Müller, History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 220.

[2] See Table, p. 109.

The following Statistics on the Vedic Literature were communicated to the Asiatic Society of Bengal by Mr. J. Muir, 1846.

Name of Veda.	Name of Sakha.	Name and Extent of Sanhita in slokas or lines of 32 syllables each.	Name and Extent of Brahmana.	Name of Commentator.	Extent of Commentary.	Remarks.
Rig-veda	1. Śâkala	12,000	Aitareya-Brâh. 5,000 in 8 pañgikas (*sic*)	On Sanhitâ, Mâdhava On Brâhm., Mâdhava	100,000 20,000	
	2. Bâshkala 3. Śânkhâyana	.. .. each 12,000	.. .. each 5,000	.. .. .. Unknown	..	Not read at Benares.
White Yagur-veda	1. Mâdhyandina	Vâgasaneyi-S. 4,000	Śatapatha, 14 kândas, 24,000	On Sanhitâ, Mahidhara, and Uvaṭa On Brâhm., Mâdhava	12,000 15,000 60,000	There is also a commentary on the Brâhmaṇa by Harihara-svâmin.
	2. Kâṇva	4,000	24,000	On Sanhitâ, Mâdhava On Brâhm., Mâdhava	12,000 55,000	
Black Yagur-veda	Taittirîya	Ápastambi-S. 9,000	5,000	On Sanhitâ, Mâdhava On Brâhm., Mâdhava	30,000 15,000	
Sâma-veda	Kauthuma	Khândasî, I Part, 2,000 Uttara-Sanhitâ, II Part, 3,000	8 Brâhmaṇas, 8,000	On Sanhitâ, Mâdhava On Brâhm., Mâdhava	16,000 25,000	
	Râṇâyana	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	..	Not read at Benares. Differs in accentuation only from the Kauthumas. The Brâhmaṇa is said to be different.
Atharva-veda	Śaunaka	10,000	Gopatha-Br. 6,000	On Sanhitâ, Mâdhava(!) On Brâhm., Mâdhava	80,000 20,000	Mâdhava is called Vidyâraṇya, at another period of his life.

&c., forming an uninterrupted chain of theological literature, extending over more than three thousand years, and receiving new links even at the present time. There are, besides, the inevitable parasites of theological literature, the controversial writings of different schools of thought and faith, all claiming to be orthodox, yet differing from each other like day and night; and lastly, the compositions of writers, professedly at variance with the opinions of the majority, declared enemies of the Brahmanic faith and the Brahmanic priesthood, whose accusations and insinuations, whose sledge-hammers of argument, and whose poisoned arrows of invective need fear no comparison with the weapons of theological warfare in any other country.

Nor can we exclude the sacred law-books, nor the ancient epic poems, the Mahâbhârata and Râmâya*n*a, nor the more modern, yet sacred literature of India, the Purâ*n*as and Tantras, if we wish to gain an insight into the religious belief of millions of human beings, who, though they all acknowledge the Veda as their supreme authority in matters of faith, are yet unable to understand one single line of

it, and in their daily life depend entirely for spiritual food on the teaching conveyed to them by these more recent and more popular books.

And even then our eye would not have reached many of the sacred recesses in which the Hindu mind has taken refuge, either to meditate on the great problems of life, or to free itself from the temptations and fetters of worldly existence by penances and mortifications of the most exquisite cruelty. India has always been teeming with religious sects, and as far as we can look back into the history of that marvellous country, its religious life has been broken up into countless local centres which it required all the ingenuity and perseverance of a priestly caste to hold together with a semblance of dogmatic uniformity. Some of these sects may almost claim the title of independent religions, as, for instance, the once famous sect of the Sikhs, possessing their own sacred code and their own priesthood, and threatening for a time to become a formidable rival of Brahmanism and Mohammedanism in India. Political circumstances gave to the sect of Nânak its historical prominence and more lasting fame. To the

student of religion it is but one out of many sects which took their origin in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and attempted to replace the corruptions of Hinduism and Mohammedanism by a purer and more spiritual worship. The Granth, i. e. the Volume, the sacred book of the Sikhs, though tedious as a whole, contains here and there treasures of really deep and poetical thought: and we may soon hope to have a complete translation of it by Dr. Trumpp. But there are other collections of religious poetry, more ancient and more original than the stanzas of Nânak; nay, many of the most beautiful verses of the Granth were borrowed from these earlier authorities, particularly from Kabir, the pupil of Râmânand. Here there is enough to occupy the students of religion: an intellectual flora of greater variety and profuseness than even the natural flora of that fertile country.

And yet we have not said a word as yet of the second book-religion of India—of the religion of Buddha, originally one only out of numberless sects, but possessing a vitality which has made its branches to overshadow the largest portion of the inhabited globe.

Who can say—I do not speak of European scholars only, but of the most learned members of the Buddhist fraternities—who can say that he has read the whole of the canonical books of the Buddhist Church, to say nothing of their commentaries or later treatises? The text and commentaries of the Buddhist canon contain, according to a statement in the Saddharma-alaṅkâra [1], 29,368,000 letters. Such statements do not convey to our mind any very definite idea, nor could any scholar vouch for their absolute correctness. But if we consider that the English Bible is said to contain about three millions and a half of letters [2] (and here vowels are counted separately from consonants), five or six times that amount would hardly seem enough as a rough estimate of the bulk of the Buddhist scriptures. The Tibetan edition of the Buddhist canon, consisting of two collections, the Kanjur and Tanjur, numbers about 325 volumes folio, each weighing in the Pekin edition from four to five pounds [3].

[1] Spence Hardy, The Legends and Theories of the Buddhists, p. 66.

[2] 3,567,180.

[3] Chips from a German Workshop, vol. i. p. 193.

According to a tradition preserved by the Buddhist schools of the South and of the North, the sacred canon comprised originally 80,000 or 84,000 tracts, but most of them were lost, so that there remained but 6,000[1].

Apparently within a smaller compass lies the sacred literature of the third of the Aryan book-religions, the so-called Zend-Avesta. But here the very scantiness of the ancient text increases the difficulty of its successful interpretation, and the absence of native commentaries has thrown nearly the whole burden of deciphering on the patience and ingenuity of European scholars.

If lastly we turn to China, we find that the religion of Confucius is founded on the Five King and the Four Shu—books in themselves of considerable extent, and surrounded by voluminous commentaries, without which even the most learned scholars would not venture to fathom the depth of their sacred canon[2].

Lao-tse, the contemporary or rather the

[1] See Burnouf, Introduction à l'histoire du Buddhisme indien, p. 37.

[2] The Chinese Classics, with a Translation, Notes, Prolegomena, and Indexes. By James Legge, D. D. 7 vols. London: Trübner & Co.

senior of Confucius, is reported to have written a large number of books[1]: no less than 930 on different questions of faith, morality, and worship, and 70 on magic. His principal work, however, the Tao-te-king, which represents the real scripture of his followers, the Tao-sse, consists only of about 5,000 words[2], and fills no more than thirty pages. But here again we find that for that very reason the text is unintelligible without copious commentaries, so that M. Julien had to consult more than sixty commentators for the purpose of his translation, the earliest going back as far as the year 163 B.C.

There is a third established religion in China, that of Fo; but Fo is only the Chinese corruption of Buddha, and though the religion of Buddha, as transferred from India to China, has assumed a peculiar character and produced an enormous literature of its own, yet Chinese

[1] Stan. Julien, *Tao te king*, p. xxvii.

[2] Ibid. pp. xxxi. xxxv. The texts vary from 5,610, 5,630, 5,688 to 5,722 words. The text published by M. Stan. Julien consists of 5,320 words. A new translation of the Tao-te-king has been published at Leipzig by Dr. Victor von Strauss, 1870.

Buddhism cannot be called an independent religion, any more than Buddhism in Ceylon, Burmah, and Siam, or in Nepaul, Tibet, and Mongolia.

But after we have collected this library of the sacred books of the world, with their indispensable commentaries, are we then in possession of the requisite materials for studying the growth and decay of the religious convictions of mankind at large? Far from it. The largest portion of mankind,—ay, and some of the most valiant champions in the religious and intellectual struggles of the world, would be unrepresented in our theological library. Think only of the Greeks and the Romans; think of the Teutonic, the Celtic and Slavonic nations! Where are we to gain an insight into what we may call their real religious convictions, previous to the comparatively recent period when their ancient temples were levelled to the ground to make room for new cathedrals, and their sacred oaks were felled to be changed into crosses, planted along every mountain pass and forest lane? Homer and Hesiod do not tell us what was the religion, the real heart-religion, of the Greeks, nor were

their own poems ever considered as sacred, or even as authoritative and binding, by the highest intellects among the Greeks. In Rome we have not even an Iliad or Odyssey; and when we ask for the religious worship of the Teutonic, the Celtic, or the Slavonic tribes, the very names of many of the deities in whom they believed are forgotten and lost for ever, and the scattered notices of their faith have to be picked up and put together like the small stones of a broken mosaic that once formed the pavement in the ruined temples of Rome.

The same gaps, the same want of representative authorities, which we witness among the Aryan, we meet again among the Semitic nations, as soon as we step out of the circle of their book-religions. The Babylonians, the Phenicians and Carthaginians, the Arabs before their conversion to Mohammedanism, all are without canonical books, and a knowledge of their religion has to be gathered, as well as may be, from monuments, inscriptions, traditions, from proper names, from proverbs, from curses, and other stray notices which require the greatest care before they can be

properly sifted and successfully fitted together.

But now let us go on further. The two beds in which the stream of Aryan and Semitic thought has been rolling on for centuries from south-east to north-west, from the Indus to the Thames, from the Euphrates to the Jordan and the Mediterranean, cover but a narrow tract of country compared with the vastness of our globe. As we rise higher, our horizon expands on every side, and wherever there are traces of human life, there are traces also of religion. Along the shores of the ancient Nile we see still standing the Pyramids, and the ruins of temples and labyrinths, their walls covered with hieroglyphic inscriptions, and with the strange pictures of gods and goddesses. On rolls of papyrus, which seem to defy the ravages of time, we have even fragments of what may be called the sacred books of the Egyptians. Yet though much has been deciphered in the ancient records of that mysterious race, the main spring of the religion of Egypt and the original intention of its ceremonial worship are far from being fully disclosed to us.

As we follow the sacred stream to its distant sources, the whole continent of Africa opens before us, and wherever we now see kraals and cattle-pens, depend upon it there was to be seen once, as there is to be seen even now, the smoke of sacrifices rising up from earth to heaven. The ancient relics of African faith are rapidly disappearing; but what has been preserved is full of interest to the student of religion with its strange worship of snakes and ancestors, its vague hope of a future life, and its not altogether faded reminiscence of a Supreme God, the Father of the black as well as of the white man[1].

From the eastern coast of Africa our eye is carried across the sea where, from Madagascar to Hawaii, island after island stands out like so many pillars of a sunken bridge that once spanned the Indian and Pacific oceans. Everywhere, whether among the dark Papuan or the yellowish Malay, or the brown Polynesian races scattered on these islands, even among the lowest of the low in the scale of humanity,

[1] Dr. Callaway, Unkulunkulu, p. 45: 'It is as though we sprang from Uthlanga; we do not know where we were made. We black men had the same origin as you, white men.'

there are, if we will but listen, whisperings about divine beings, imaginings of a future life; there are prayers and sacrifices which, even in their most degraded and degrading form, still bear witness to that old and ineradicable faith that everywhere there is a God to hear our prayers, if we will but call on Him, and to accept our offerings, whether they are offered as a ransom for sin, or as a token of a grateful heart.

Still farther east the double continent of America becomes visible, and in spite of the unchristian vandalism of its first discoverers and conquerors, there, too, we find materials for the study of an ancient, and, it would seem, independent faith. Unfortunately, the religious and mythological traditions collected by the first Europeans who came in contact with the natives of America, reach back but a short distance beyond the time when they were written down, and they seem in several cases to reflect the thoughts of the Spanish listeners as much as those of the native narrators. The quaint hieroglyphic manuscripts of Mexico and Guatemala have as yet told us very little, and the accounts written by natives in their native

language have to be used with great caution. Still the ancient religion of the Aztecs of Mexico and of the Incas of Peru is full of interesting problems. As we advance towards the north and its red-skinned inhabitants our information becomes more meagre still, and after what happened some years ago, no *Livre des Sauvages* is likely to come to our assistance again. Yet there are wild and home-grown specimens of religious faith to be studied even now among the receding and gradually perishing tribes of the Red Indians, and, in their languages as well as in their religions, traces may possibly still be found, before it is too late, of pre-historic migrations of men from the primitive Asiatic to the American continent, either across the stepping-stones of the Aleutic bridge in the north, or lower south by drifting with favourable winds from island to island, till the hardy canoe was landed or wrecked on the American coast, never to return again to the Asiatic home from which it had started.

And when in our religious survey we finally come back again to the Asiatic continent, we find here too, although nearly the whole of its

area is now occupied by one or the other of the eight book-religions, by Mosaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism, by Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism, and in China by the religions of Confucius and Lao-tse, that nevertheless partly below the surface, and in some places still on the surface, more primitive forms of worship have maintained themselves. I mean the Shamanism of the Mongolian race, and the beautiful half-Homeric mythology of the Finnish and Esthonian tribes.

And now that I have displayed this world-wide panorama before your eyes, you will share, I think, the feeling of dismay with which the student of the science of religion looks around, and asks himself where to begin and how to proceed. That there are materials in abundance, capable of scientific treatment, no one would venture to deny. But how are they to be held together? How are we to discover what all these religions share in common? How they differ? How they rise and how they decline? What they are and what they mean?

Let us take the old saying, *Divide et impera*, and translate it somewhat freely by 'Classify

and conquer,' and I believe we shall then lay hold of the old thread of Ariadne which has led the students of many a science through darker labyrinths even than the labyrinth of the religions of the world. All real science rests on classification, and only in case we cannot succeed in classifying the various dialects of faith, shall we have to confess that a science of religion is really an impossibility. If the ground before us has once been properly surveyed and carefully parcelled out, each scholar may then cultivate his own glebe, without wasting his energies, and without losing sight of the general purposes to which all special researches must be subservient.

How, then, is the vast domain of religion to be parcelled out? How are religions to be classified, or, we ought rather to ask first, how have they been classified before now? The simplest classification, and one which we find adopted in almost every country, is that into *true* and *false* religions. It is very much like the first classification of languages into one's own language and the languages of the rest of the world; as the Greeks would say, into the languages of the Greeks and the

Barbarians; or, as the Jews would say, into the languages of the Jews and the Gentiles; or, as the Hindus would say, into the languages of the Âryas and Mle*kkh*as; or, as the Chinese would say, into the languages of the Middle Empire and that of the Outer Barbarians. I need not say why that sort of classification is useless for scientific purposes.

There is another classification, apparently of a more scientific character, but if examined more closely, equally worthless to the student of religion. I mean the well-known division into *revealed* and *natural* religions.

I have first to say a few words on the meaning attached to natural religion. That word is constantly used in very different acceptations. It is applied by several writers to certain historical forms of religion, which are looked upon as not resting on the authority of revelation, in whatever sense that word may be hereafter interpreted. Thus Buddhism would be a natural religion in the eyes of the Brahmans, Brahmanism would be a natural religion in the eyes of the Mohammedans. With us, all religions except Christianity and, though in a lesser degree, Mosaism, would be classed as

merely natural; and though natural does not imply false, yet it distinctly implies the absence of any sanction beyond the sense of truth, or the voice of conscience that is within us.

But Natural Religion is also used in a very different sense, particularly by the philosophers of the last century. When people began to subject the principal historical religions to a critical analysis, they found that after removing what was peculiar to each, there remained certain principles which they all shared in common. These were supposed to be the principles of Natural Religion.

Again, when everything that seemed supernatural, miraculous, and irrational, had been removed from the pages of the New Testament, there still remained a kind of skeleton of religion, and this too was passed off under the name of Natural Religion.

During the last century, philosophers who were opposing the spread of scepticism and infidelity, thought that this kind of natural, or, as it was also called, rational religion, might serve as a breakwater against utter unbelief;—but their endeavours led to no result. When Diderot said that all revealed religions were

the heresies of Natural Religion, he meant by Natural Religion a body of truths implanted in human nature, to be discovered by the eye of reason alone, and independent of any such historical or local influences as give to each religion its peculiar character and individual aspect. The existence of a deity, the nature of his attributes, such as Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, Eternity, Self-existence, Spirituality, the Goodness also of the Deity, and, connected with it, the admission of a distinction between Good and Evil, between Virtue and Vice, all this, and according to some writers, the Unity and Personality also of the Deity, were included in the domain of Natural Religion. The scientific treatment of this so-called Natural Religion received the name of Natural Theology, a title rendered famous in the beginning of our century by the much praised and much abused work of Paley.

Natural Religion corresponds in the science of religion to what in the science of language used to be called *Grammaire générale*, a collection of fundamental rules which are supposed to be self-evident, and indispensable in every grammar, but which, strange to say, never exist

in their purity and completeness in any language that is or ever has been spoken by human beings. It is the same with religion. There never has been any real religion, consisting exclusively of the pure and simple tenets of Natural Religion, though there have been certain philosophers who brought themselves to believe that their religion was entirely rational, was, in fact, pure and simple Deism.

If we speak, therefore, of a classification of all historical religions into revealed and natural, what is meant by natural is simply the negation of revealed, and if we tried to carry out the classification practically, we should find the same result as before. We should have on one side Christianity alone, or, according to some theologians, Christianity and Judaism; on the other, all the remaining religions of the world.

This classification, therefore, whatever may be its practical value, is perfectly useless for scientific purposes. A more extended study shows us very soon that the claim of revelation is set up by the founders, or if not by them, at all events by the later preachers and advocates of most religions; and would therefore be declined by all but ourselves as a distinguishing

feature of Christianity and Judaism. We shall see, in fact, that the claims to a revealed authority are urged far more strongly and elaborately by the believers in the Veda, than by the apologetical theologians among the Jews and Christians. Even Buddha, originally the most thoroughly human and self-dependent among the founders of religion, is by a strange kind of inconsistency represented, in later controversial writings, as in possession of revealed truth [1]. He himself could not, like Numa or Zoroaster, or Mohammed [2], claim communication with higher spirits; still less could he, like the poets of the Veda, speak of divine inspirations and god-given utterances: for according to him there was none among the spirits greater or wiser than himself, and the gods of the Veda had become his servants and worshippers. Buddha himself appeals only to what we should call the inner light [3]. When he delivered for the first time the four fundamental

[1] History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, by Max Müller, p. 83.

[2] Sprenger, Mohammed, vol. ii. p. 426.

[3] Gogerly, The Evidences and Doctrines of Christian Religion. Colombo, 1862. Part I.

doctrines of his system, he said, 'Mendicants, for the attainment of these previously unknown doctrines, the eye, the knowledge, the wisdom, the clear perception, the light were developed within me.' He was called Sarva*gña* or omniscient by his earliest pupils; but when in later times, it was seen that on several points Buddha had but spoken the language of his age, and had shared the errors current among his contemporaries with regard to the shape of the earth and the movement of the heavenly bodies; an important concession was made by Buddhist theologians. They limited the meaning of the word 'omniscient,' as applied to Buddha, to a knowledge of the principal doctrines of his system, and concerning these, but these only, they declared him to have been infallible. This may seem to be a late, and almost modern view, but whether modern or ancient, it certainly reflects great credit on the Buddhist theologians. In the Milinda Pra*s*na, however, which is a canonical book, we see that the same idea was already rising in the mind of the great Nāgasena. Being asked by King Milinda whether Buddha is omniscient, he replies: 'Yes, Great King, the blessed Buddha is

omniscient. But Buddha does not at all times exercise his omniscience. By meditation he knows all things ; meditating he knows everything he desires to know.' In this reply a distinction is evidently intended between subjects that may be known by sense and reason, and subjects that can be known by meditation only. Within the domain of sense and reason, Nāgasena does not claim omniscience or infallibility for Buddha, but he claims for him both omniscience and infallibility in all that is to be perceived by meditation only, or, as we should say, in matters of faith[1].

I shall have to explain to you hereafter the extraordinary contrivances by which the Brah-

[1] Galileo, in his letter to Ruinieri, writes: 'I said that I thought that in the Bible there were expressions in conformity with that which was anciently believed regarding astronomical science, and that of this nature might be the test brought against me, viz. Joshua x. 12, 13. . . . . I got no answer but a shrug of the shoulder. . . . . At length I was compelled, as a true Catholic, to retract my opinion, and as a punishment my "Dialogue" was prohibited ; and, after five months, I was dismissed from Rome (at the time when the plague infected Florence), and for a prison the house of the dearest friend that I had in Siena, the Archbishop Piccolomini, was prescribed to me with generous kindness.'

mans endeavoured to eliminate every human element from the hymns of the Veda, and to establish, not only the revealed, but the prehistoric or even ante-mundane character of their scriptures. No apologetic writings have ever carried the theory of revelation to greater extremes.

In the present stage of our inquiries, all that I wish to point out is this,—that when the founders or defenders of nearly all the religions of the world appeal to some kind of revelation in support of the truth of their doctrines, it could answer no useful purpose were we to attempt any classification on such disputed ground. Whether the claim of a natural or preternatural revelation, put forward by nearly all religions, is well founded or not, is not the question at present. It falls to the province of Theoretic Theology to explain the true meaning of revelation, for few words have been used so vaguely and in so many different senses. It falls to its province to explain, not only how the veil was withdrawn that intercepted for a time the rays of divine truth, but, what is a far more difficult problem, how there could ever have been a veil between truth and

the seeker of truth, between the adoring heart and the object of the highest adoration, between the Father and his children.

In Comparative Theology our task is different: we have simply to deal with the facts such as we find them. If people regard their religion as revealed, it is to them a revealed religion, and has to be treated as such by an impartial historian. We cannot determine a question by adopting, without discussion, the claims of one party, and ignoring those of the other.

But this principle of classification into revealed and natural religions appears still more faulty, when we look at it from another point of view. Even if we granted that all religions, except Christianity and Mosaism, derived their origin from those faculties of the mind only which, according to Paley, are sufficient by themselves for calling into life the fundamental tenets of what we explained before as natural religion, the classification of Christianity and Judaism on one side as *revealed*, and of the other religions as *natural*, would still be defective, for the simple reason that no religion, though founded on revelation, can ever be

entirely separated from natural religion. The tenets of natural religion, though they never constituted by themselves a real historical religion, supply the only ground on which even revealed religions can stand, the only soil where they can strike root, and from which they can receive nourishment and life. If we took away that soil, or if we supposed that it, too, had to be supplied by revelation, we should not only run counter to the letter and spirit of the Old and the New Testament, but we should degrade revealed religion by changing it into a mere formula, to be accepted by a recipient incapable of questioning, weighing, and appreciating its truth; we should indeed have the germ, but we should have thrown away the congenial soil in which alone the germs of revealed truth can live and grow.

Christianity, addressing itself not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles, not only to the ignorant, but also to the learned, not only to the believer, but, in the first instance, to the unbeliever, presupposed in all of them the elements of natural religion, and with them the power of choosing between truth and untruth. Thus only could St. Paul say: 'Prove all

things, hold fast that which is good.' (1 Thess. v. 21.)

The same is true with regard to the Old Testament. There, too, the belief in a Deity, and in some at least of its indefeasible attributes, is taken for granted, and the prophets who call the wayward Jews back to the worship of Jehovah, appeal to them as competent by the truth-testing power that is within them, to choose between Jehovah and the gods of the Gentiles, between truth and untruth. Remember only the important chapter in the earliest history of the Jews, when Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

'And Joshua said unto all the people: Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.'

And then, after reminding them of all that

God has done for them, he concludes by saying:

'Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord.

'And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, *choose you* this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose lands ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

In order to choose between different gods and different forms of faith, a man must possess the faculty of choosing, the instruments of testing truth and untruth, whether revealed or not: he must know that certain fundamental tenets cannot be absent in any true religion, and that there are doctrines against which his rational or moral conscience revolts as incompatible with truth. In short, there must be the foundation of religion, there must be the solid rock, before it is possible to erect an altar, a

temple, or a church: and if we call that foundation natural religion, it is clear that no revealed religion can be thought of which does not rest more or less firmly on natural religion.

These difficulties have been felt distinctly by some of our most learned divines, who have attempted a classification of religions from their own point of view. New definitions of natural religion have therefore been proposed in order to avoid the overlapping of the two definitions of natural and revealed religion[1]. Natural religion has, for instance, been explained as the religion of nature before revelation, such as may be supposed to have existed among the patriarchs, or to exist still among primitive people who have not yet been enlightened by Christianity or debased by idolatry.

According to this view we should have to distinguish not two, but three classes of religion: the primitive or natural, the debased or idolatrous, and the revealed. But, as pointed out before, the first, the so-called primitive or natural religion, exists in the minds of modern philosophers rather than of ancient poets and

[1] See Professor Jowett's Essay on Natural Religion, p. 458.

prophets. History never tells us of any race with whom the simple feeling of reverence for higher powers was not hidden under mythological disguises. Nor would it be possible even thus to separate the three classes of religion by sharp and definite lines of demarcation, because both the debased or idolatrous and the purified or revealed religions would of necessity include within themselves the elements of natural religion.

Nor do we diminish these difficulties in the classificatory stage of our science if, in the place of this simple natural religion, we admit with other theologians and philosophers, a universal primeval revelation. This universal primeval revelation is only another name for natural religion, and it rests on no authority but the speculations of philosophers. The same class of philosophers, considering that language was too wonderful an achievement for the human mind, insisted on the necessity of admitting a universal primeval language, revealed directly by God to man, or rather to mute beings; while the more thoughtful and the more reverent among the Fathers of the Church, and among the founders of modern

philosophy pointed out that it was more consonant with the general working of an all-wise and all-powerful Creator, that he should have endowed human nature with the essential conditions of speech, instead of presenting mute beings with grammars and dictionaries ready-made. Is an infant less wonderful than a man? an acorn less wonderful than an oak tree? a cell, including potentially within itself all that it has to become hereafter, less wonderful than all the moving creatures that have life? The same applies to religion. A universal primeval religion revealed direct by God to man, or rather to a crowd of atheists, may, to our human wisdom, seem the best solution of all difficulties: but a higher wisdom speaks to us from out the realities of history, and teaches us, if we will but learn, that 'we have all to seek the Lord, if haply we may feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.'

Of the hypothesis of a universal primeval revelation and all its self-created difficulties we shall have to speak again: for the present it must suffice if we have shown that the problem of a scientific classification of

religions is not brought nearer to its solution by the additional assumption of another purely hypothetical class.

Another apparently more scientific classification is that into *national* and *individual* religions, the former comprehending religions the founders of which are unknown to us as they were to those who believed in them; the latter comprehending religious systems which bear the names of those by whom they were supposed to have been originally planned or established. To the former class, speaking only of the religions with which we are most familiar, belong those of the ancient Brahmans, the Greeks, Romans, Teutons, Slaves, and Celts; to the latter those of Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, Lao-tse, Christ, and Mohammed.

This division, however, though easily applied in a general way, and useful for certain purposes, fails us as soon as we attempt to apply it in a more critical spirit. It is quite true that neither a Brahman, nor a Greek, nor a Roman would have known what to answer when asked, who was the founder of his religion, who first declared the existence of Indra, Zeus, or Jupiter;

but the student of antiquity can still discover in the various forms which the ancient Aryan worship has assumed in India, Greece, and Italy, the influence of individual minds or schools or climates. If, on the other hand, we ask the founders of so-called individual religions, whether their doctrine is a new one, whether they preach a new God, we almost always receive a negative answer. Confucius emphatically asserts that he was a transmitter, not a maker; Buddha delights in representing himself as a mere link in a long chain of enlightened teachers; Christ declares that he came to fulfil, not to destroy the Law or the Prophets; and even Mohammed insisted on tracing his faith back to Ibrāhym, i. e. Abraham, the friend of God, whom he called a Moslim, and not a Jew or Christian, (Koran iii. 60,) and who, he maintained, had founded the temple at Mekka[1]. To determine how much is peculiar to the supposed founder of a religion, how much he received from his predecessors, and how much was added by his disciples, is almost impossible; nay, it is perfectly true that no religion has ever struck root and lived, unless it found a

[1] Sprenger, Mohammed, vol. iii. pp. 49, 489.

congenial soil from which to draw its strength and support.

We have not finished yet. A very important, and, for certain purposes, very useful classification has been that into *polytheistic*, *dualistic*, and *monotheistic* religions. If religion rests chiefly on a belief in a Higher Power, then the nature of that Higher Power would seem to supply the most characteristic feature by which to classify the religions of the world. Nor do I deny that for certain purposes such a classification has proved useful: all I maintain is that we should thus have to class together religions most heterogeneous in other respects, though agreeing in the number of their deities. Besides, it would certainly be necessary to add two other classes —the *henotheistic* and the *atheistic*. Henotheistic religions differ from polytheistic because, although they recognise the existence of various deities, or names of deities, they represent each deity as independent of all the rest, as the only deity present in the mind of the worshipper at the time of his worship and prayer. This character is very prominent in the religion of the Vedic poets. Although many

gods are invoked in different hymns, sometimes also in the same hymn, yet there is no rule of precedence established among them; and, according to the varying aspects of nature, and the varying cravings of the human heart, it is sometimes Indra, the god of the blue sky, sometimes Agni, the god of fire, sometimes Varuna, the ancient god of the firmament, who are praised as supreme without any suspicion of rivalry, or any idea of subordination. This peculiar phase of religion, this worship of single gods, forms probably everywhere the first stage in the growth of polytheism, and deserves therefore a separate name[1].

As to atheistic religions, they might seem to be perfectly impossible; and yet the fact cannot be disputed away that the religion of Buddha was from the beginning purely atheistic. The idea of the Godhead, after it had been degraded by endless mythological absurdities which struck and repelled the heart of Buddha, was, for a time at least, entirely expelled from the sanctuary of the human mind:

[1] History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature by Max Müller, second edition, p. 532.

and the highest morality that was ever taught before the rise of Christianity was taught by men with whom the gods had become mere phantoms, and who had no altars, not even an altar to the Unknown God.

It will be the object of my next lecture to show that the only scientific and truly genetic classification of religions is the same as the classification of languages, and that, particularly in the early history of the human intellect, there exists the most intimate relationship between language, religion, and nationality—a relationship quite independent of those physical elements, the blood, the skull, or the hair, on which ethnologists have attempted to found their classification of the human race.

THIRD LECTURE.

DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION,

MARCH 5, 1870.

IF we approached the religions of mankind without any prejudices or predilections, in that frame of mind in which the lover of truth or the man of science ought to approach every subject, I believe we should not be long before recognising the natural lines of demarcation which divide the whole religious world into several great continents. I am speaking, of course, of ancient religions only, or of the earliest period in the history of religious thought. In that primitive period which might be called, if not prehistoric, at least purely ethnic, because what we know of it consists only in the general movements of nations, and not in the acts of individuals, of parties, or of states—in that primitive period, I say, nations

have been called languages; and in our best works on the ancient history of mankind, a map of languages now takes the place of a map of nations. But during the same primitive period nations might with equal right be called religions; for there is at that time the same, nay, an even more intimate, relationship between religion and nationality than between language and nationality.

In order clearly to explain my meaning, I shall have to refer, as shortly as possible, to the speculations of some German philosophers on the true relation between language, religion, and nationality—speculations which have as yet received less attention on the part of modern ethnologists than they seem to me to deserve.

It was Schelling, one of the profoundest thinkers of Germany, who first asked the question, What makes an *ethnos*? What is the true origin of a people? How did human beings become a people? And the answer which he gave, though it sounded startling to me when, in 1845, I listened, at Berlin, to the lectures of the old philosopher, has been confirmed more and more by subsequent

researches into the history of language and religion.

To say that man is a gregarious animal, and that, like swarms of bees, or herds of wild elephants, men keep together instinctively, and thus form themselves into a people, is saying very little. It might explain the agglomeration of one large flock of human beings, but it would never explain the formation of individual peoples.

Nor should we advance much towards a solution of our problem, if we were told that men break up into peoples as bees break up into swarms, by following different queens, by owing allegiance to different governments. Allegiance to the same government, particularly in ancient times, is the result rather than the cause of nationality; while in historical times, such has been the confusion produced by extraneous influences, by brute force, or dynastic combinations, that the natural development of peoples has been entirely arrested, and we frequently find one and the same people divided by different governments, and different peoples united under the same ruler.

Our question, What makes a people? has to be considered in reference to the most ancient times. How did men form themselves into a people before there were kings or shepherds of men? Was it through community of blood? I doubt it. Community of blood produces families, clans, possibly races, but it does not produce that higher and purely moral feeling which binds men together and makes them a people.

It is language and religion that make a people, but religion is even a more powerful agent than language. The languages of many of the aboriginal inhabitants of Northern America are but dialectic varieties of one type, but those who spoke these dialects have never coalesced into a people. They remained mere clans or wandering tribes; they never knew the feeling of a nation, because they never knew the feeling of worshipping the same gods. The Greeks, on the contrary, though speaking their strongly marked, and I doubt whether mutually intelligible dialects, the Æolic, the Doric, the Ionic, felt themselves at all times, even when ruled by different tyrants, or broken up into numerous republics, as one

great Hellenic people. What was it, then, that preserved in their hearts, in spite of dialects, in spite of dynasties, in spite even of the feuds of tribes and the jealousies of states, the deep feeling of that ideal unity which constitutes a people? It was their primitive religion; it was a dim recollection of the common allegiance they owed from time immemorial to the great father of gods and men; it was their belief in the old Zeus of Dodona, the Panhellenic Zeus.

Perhaps the most signal confirmation of this view that it is religion even more than language which supplies the foundation of nationality, is to be found in the history of the Jews, the chosen people of God. The language of the Jews differed from that of the Phenicians, the Moabites, and other neighbouring tribes much less than the Greek dialects differed from each other. But the worship of Jehovah made the Jews a peculiar people, the people of Jehovah, separated by their God, though not by their language, from the people of Chemosh (the Moabites[1]) and from the worship-

[1] Numb. xxi. 29; Jeremiah xlviii. 7: 'And Chemosh shall

pers of Baal and Ashtoreth. It was their faith in Jehovah that changed the wandering tribes of Israel into a nation.

'A people,' as Schelling says, 'exists only when it has determined itself with regard to its mythology. This mythology, therefore, cannot take its origin after a national separation has taken place, after a people has become a people: nor could it spring up while a people was still contained as an invisible part in the whole of humanity; but its origin must be referred to that very period of transition before a people has assumed its definite existence, and when it is on the point of separating and constituting itself. The same applies to the language of a people; it becomes definite at the same time that a people becomes definite[1].'

Hegel, the great rival of Schelling, arrived at the same conclusion. In his Philosophy of History he says: 'The idea of God constitutes the general foundation of a people. Whatever

go forth into captivity, with his priests and his princes together.'

[1] Vorlesungen über Philosophie der Mythologie, vol. i. p. 107 *seq.*

is the form of a religion, the same is the form of a state and its constitution: it springs from religion, so much so that the Athenian and the Roman states were possible only with the peculiar heathendom of those peoples, and that even now a Roman Catholic state has a different genius and a different constitution from a Protestant state. The genius of a people is a definite, individual genius which becomes conscious of its individuality in different spheres: in the character of its moral life, its political constitution, its art, religion and science[1].'

But this is not an idea of philosophers only. Historians, and, more particularly, the students of the history of law, have arrived at very much the same conclusion. Though to many

[1] Though these words of Hegel's were published long before Schelling's lectures, they seem to me to breathe the spirit of Schelling rather than of Hegel, and it is but fair therefore to state that Schelling's lectures, though not published, were printed and circulated among friends twenty years before they were delivered at Berlin. The question of priority may seem of little importance on matters such as these, but there is nevertheless much truth in Schelling's remark, that philosophy advances not so much by the answers given to difficult problems, as by the starting of new problems, and by asking questions which no one else would think of asking.

of them law seems naturally to be the foundation of society, and the bond that binds a nation together, those who look below the surface have quickly perceived that law itself, at least ancient law, derives its authority, its force, its very life from religion. Sir H. Maine is no doubt right when, in the case of the so-called Laws of Manu, he rejects the idea of the Deity dictating an entire code or body of law, as an idea of a decidedly modern origin. Yet the belief that the law-giver enjoyed some closer intimacy with the Deity than ordinary mortals, pervades the ancient traditions of many nations. According to a well-known passage in Diodorus Siculus (l. 1. c. 94), the Egyptians believed their laws to have been communicated to Mnevis by Hermes; the Cretans held that Minos received his laws from Zeus, the Lacedæmonians that Lykurgos received his laws from Apollon. According to the Arians, their law-giver, Zathraustes, had received his laws from the Good Spirit; according to the Getæ, Zamolxis received his laws from the goddess Hestia; and, according to the Jews, Moses received his laws from the god Iao.

No one has pointed out more forcibly than Sir H. Maine that in ancient times religion as a divine influence was underlying and supporting every relation of life and every social institution. 'A supernatural presidency,' he writes, 'is supposed to consecrate and keep together all the cardinal institutions of those early times, the state, the race, and the family' (p. 6). 'The elementary group is the family; the aggregation of families forms the *gens* or the house. The aggregation of houses makes the tribe. The aggregation of tribes constitutes the commonwealth' (p. 128). Now the family is held together by the family *sacra* (p. 191), and so were the *gens*, the tribe, and the commonwealth; and strangers could only be admitted to these brotherhoods by being admitted to their *sacra* (p. 131). At a later time, law breaks away from religion (p. 193), but even then many traces remain to show that the hearth was the first altar, the father the first elder, his wife and children and slaves the first congregation gathered together round the sacred fire—the Hestia, the goddess of the house, and in the end the goddess of the people. To the present day, marriage, the

most important of civil acts, the very foundation of civilised life, has retained the religious character which it had from the very beginning of history.

Let us see now what religion really is in those early ages of which we are here speaking: I do not mean religion as a silent power, working in the heart of man; I mean religion in its outward appearance, religion as something outspoken, tangible, and definite, that can be described and communicated to others. We shall find that in that sense religion lies within a very small compass. A few words, recognised as names of the deity; a few epithets that have been raised from their material meaning to a higher and more spiritual stage, I mean words which expressed originally bodily strength, or brightness, or purity, and which gradually came to mean greatness, goodness, and holiness; lastly, some more or less technical terms expressive of such ideas as *sacrifice*, *altar*, *prayer*, possibly *virtue* and *sin*, *body* and *spirit*—this is what constitutes the outward framework of the incipient religions of antiquity. If we look at this simple manifestation of religion, we see at once why religion,

during those early ages of which we are here speaking, may really and truly be called a sacred dialect of human speech; how at all events early religion and early language are most intimately connected, religion depending entirely for its outward expression on the more or less adequate resources of language.

If this dependence of early religion on language is once clearly understood, it follows, as a matter of course, that whatever classification has been found most useful in the Science of Language ought to prove equally useful in the Science of Religion. If there is a truly genetic relationship of languages, the same relationship ought to hold together the religions of the world, at least the most ancient religions.

Before we proceed therefore to consider the proper classification of religions, it will be necessary to say a few words on the present state of our knowledge with regard to the genetic relationship of languages.

If we confine ourselves to the Asiatic continent with its important peninsula of Europe, we find that in the vast desert of drifting human speech three, and only three, oases

have been formed in which, before the beginning of all history, language became permanent and traditional, assumed in fact a new character, a character totally different from the original character of the floating and constantly varying speech of human beings. These three oases of language are known by the name of *Turanian*, *Semitic*, and *Aryan*. In these three centres, more particularly in the *Aryan* and *Semitic*, language ceased to be natural; its growth was arrested, and it became permanent, solid, petrified, or, if you like, historical speech. I have always maintained that this centralisation and traditional conservation of language could only have been the result of religious and political influences, and I now intend to show that we really have clear evidence of three independent settlements of religion, the *Turanian*, the *Semitic*, and the *Aryan*, concomitantly with the three great settlements of language.

Taking Chinese for what it can hardly any longer be doubted that it is, viz. the earliest representative of Turanian speech, we find in China an ancient colourless and unpoetical religion, a religion we might almost venture

to call monosyllabic, consisting of the worship of a host of single spirits, representing the sky, the sun, storms and lightning, mountains and rivers, one standing by the side of the other without any mutual attraction, without any higher principle to hold them together. In addition to this, we likewise meet in China with the worship of ancestral spirits, the spirits of the departed, who are supposed to retain some cognisance of human affairs, and to possess peculiar powers which they exercise for good or for evil. This double worship of human and of natural spirits constitutes the old popular religion of China, and it has lived on to the present day, at least in the lower ranks of society, though there towers above it a more elevated range of half religious and half philosophical faith, a belief in two higher Powers which, in the language of philosophy, may mean *Form* and *Matter*, in the language of Ethics, *Good* and *Evil*, but which in the original language of religion and mythology are represented as *Heaven* and *Earth*.

It is true that we know the ancient popular religion of China from the works of Confucius only, or from even more modern sources. But

Confucius, though he is called the founder of a new religion, was really but the new preacher of an old religion. He was emphatically a transmitter, not a maker[1]. He says himself, 'I only hand on; I cannot create new things. I believe in the ancients, and therefore I love them[2].'

We find, secondly, the ancient worship of the Semitic races, clearly marked by a number of names of the Deity, which appear in the polytheistic religions of the Babylonians, the Phenicians, and Carthaginians, as well as in the monotheistic creeds of Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans. It is almost impossible to characterise the religion of people so different from each other in language, in literature, and general civilisation, so different also from themselves at different periods of their history; but if I ventured to characterise the worship of all the Semitic nations by one word, I should say it was pre-eminently a worship of *God in History*, of God as affecting the destinies of individuals and races and nations rather than of God as wielding the powers

[1] Dr. Legge, Life of Confucius, p. 96.

[2] Lün-yü (§ 1. a); Schott, Chinesische Literatur, p. 7.

of nature. The names of the Semitic deities are mostly words expressive of moral qualities; they mean the Strong, the Exalted, the Lord, the King; and they grow but seldom into divine personalities, definite in their outward appearance or easily to be recognised by strongly marked features of a real dramatic character. Hence many of the ancient Semitic gods have a tendency to run together, and a transition from the worship of single gods to the worship of one God required no great effort. In the monotonous desert, more particularly, the worship of single gods glided away almost imperceptibly into the worship of one God. If I were to add, as a distinguishing mark, that the Semitic religions excluded the feminine gender in their names of the Deity, or that all their female deities were only representatives of the active energies of older and sexless gods, this would be true of some only, not of all; and it would require nearly as many limitations as the statement of M. Renan, that the Semitic religions were instinctively monotheistic[1].

[1] Semitic Monotheism, in Chips from a German Workshop, vol. i. pp. 342–380.

We find lastly the ancient worship of the Aryan race, carried to all the corners of the earth by its adventurous sons, and easily recognised, whether in the valleys of India or in the forests of Germany, by the common names of the Deity, all originally expressive of natural powers. Their worship is not, as has been so often said, a worship of nature. But if it had to be characterised by one word, I should venture to call it a worship of *God in Nature*, of God as appearing behind the gorgeous veil of Nature, rather than as hidden behind the veil of the sanctuary of the human heart. The gods of the Aryan pantheon assume an individuality so strongly marked and permanent, that with the Aryans, a transition to monotheism required a powerful struggle, and seldom took effect without iconoclastic revolutions or philosophical despair.

These three classes of religion are not to be mistaken, as little as the three classes of language, the Turanian, the Semitic, and the Aryan. They mark three events in the most ancient history of the world, events which have determined the whole fate of the human race, and of which we ourselves still feel the con-

sequences in our language, in our thoughts, and in our religion.

But the chaos which these three leaders in language, thought, and religion, the Turanian, the Semitic, and the Aryan, left behind, was not altogether a chaos. The stream of language from which these three channels had separated, rolled on; the sacred fire of religion from which these three altars had been lighted was not extinguished, though hidden in smoke and ashes. There was language and there was religion everywhere in the world, but it was natural, wild-growing language and religion; it had no history, it left no history, and it is therefore incapable of that peculiar scientific treatment which has been found applicable to a study of the languages and the religions of the Chinese, the Semitic, and the Aryan nations.

People wonder why the students of language have not succeeded in establishing more than three families of speech—or rather two, for the Turanian can hardly be called a family, in the strict sense of that word, until it has been fully proved that Chinese forms the centre of the two Turanian branches, the North Tura-

nian on one side, and the South Turanian on the other; that Chinese[1] forms, in fact, the earliest settlement of that unsettled mass of speech, which, at a later stage, became more fixed and traditional,—in the north, in *Tungusic*, *Mongolic*, *Tataric*, and *Finnic*, and in the south, in *Taic*, *Malaic*, *Bhotiya*, and *Tamulic*.

The reason why scholars have discovered no more than these two or three great families of speech is very simple. There were no more, and we cannot make more. Families of languages are very peculiar formations; they are, and they must be, the exception, not the rule, in the growth of language. There was always the possibility, but there never was, as far as I can judge, any necessity for human speech leaving its primitive stage of wild growth and wild decay. If it had not been for what I consider a purely spontaneous act on the part of the ancestors of the Semitic, Aryan, and Turanian races, all languages might for ever have remained ephemeral, answering the purposes of every generation that comes and goes, struggling on, now gaining, now

[1] M. M., Lecture on the Stratification of Language, p. 4.

losing, sometimes acquiring a certain permanence, but after a season breaking up again, and carried away like blocks of ice by the waters that rise underneath the surface. Our very idea of language would then have been something totally different from what it is now.

For what are we doing?

We first form our idea of what language ought to be from those exceptional languages which were arrested in their natural growth by social, religious, political, or at all events by extraneous influences, and we then turn round and wonder why all languages are not like these two or three exceptional channels of speech. We might as well wonder why all animals are not domesticated, or why, besides the garden anemone, there should be endless varieties of the same flower growing wild on the meadow and in the woods.

In the Turanian class, in which the original concentration was never so powerful as in the Aryan and Semitic families, we can still catch a glimpse of the natural growth of language, though confined within certain limits. The different settlements of this great floating mass of homogeneous speech do not show such definite

marks of relationship as Hebrew and Arabic, Greek and Sanskrit, but only such sporadic coincidences and general structural similarities as can be explained by the admission of a primitive concentration, followed by a new period of independent growth. It would be wilful blindness not to recognise the definite and characteristic features which pervade the North Turanian languages: it would be impossible to explain the coincidences between Hungarian, Lapponian, Esthonian, and Finnish, except on the supposition that there was a very early concentration of speech from which these dialects branched off. We see less clearly in the South Turanian group, though I confess my surprise even here has always been, not that there should be so few, but that there should be even these few relics, attesting a former community of these divergent streams of language. The point in which the South Turanian and North Turanian languages meet goes back as far as Chinese; for that Chinese is at the root of Mandshu and Mongolian as well as of Siamese and Tibetan becomes daily more apparent through the researches of Mr. Edkins and other Chinese scholars.

There is no hurry for pronouncing definitely on these questions: only we must not permit the progress of free inquiry to be barred by dogmatic scepticism; we must not look for evidence which from the nature of the case we cannot and ought not to find; and, before all things, we must not allow ourselves to be persuaded that for the discovery of truth blinkers are more useful than spectacles.

If we turn away from the Asiatic continent, the original home of the Aryan, the Semitic, and the Turanian languages, we find that in Africa, too, a comparative study of dialects has clearly proved a concentration of African language, the results of which may be seen in the uniform *Bântu* dialects, spoken from the equator to the Keiskamma[1]. North of this body of Bântu or Kafir speech, we have an independent settlement of Semitic language in the Berber and the Galla dialects; south of it we have only the Hottentot and Bushman tongues, the latter hardly analysed as yet, the former supposed to be related to languages

[1] Bleek, Comparative Grammar of the South African Languages, p. 2.

spoken in Northern Africa, from which it became separated by the intrusion of the Kafir tribes. Some scholars have indeed imagined a relationship between the language of the Hottentots, the Nubian dialects, and the ancient Egyptian, a language which, whatever its real relationship may be, marks at all events another primeval settlement of speech and religion outside the Asiatic continent.

But while the spoken languages of the African continent enable us to perceive in a general way the original articulation of the primitive population of Africa—for there is a continuity in language which nothing can destroy—we know, and can know, but little of the growth and decay of African religion. In many places Mohammedanism and Christianity have swept away every recollection of the ancient gods; and even when attempts have been made by missionaries or travellers to describe the religious status of Zulus or Hottentots, they could only see the most recent forms of African faith, and those were changed almost invariably into grotesque caricatures. Of ancient African religion we have but one record, viz. in the monuments of Egypt; but

here, in spite of the abundance of materials, in spite of the ruins of temples, and numberless statues and half-deciphered papyri, I must confess that we have not yet come very near to the beatings of the heart which once gave life to all this strange and mysterious grandeur[1].

What applies to Africa applies to America. In the North we have the languages as witnesses of ancient migrations, but of ancient religion we have, again, hardly anything. In the South we know of two linguistic and political centres; and there, in Mexico and Peru, we meet with curious, though not always trustworthy, traditions of an ancient and well-established system of religious faith and worship.

The Science of Religion has this advantage over the Science of Language, if advantage it may be called, that in several cases where the latter has materials sufficient to raise problems of the highest importance, but not sufficient

[1] De Vogüé, Journal Asiatique, 1867, p. 136. De Rougé, Sur la Religion des anciens Égyptiens, in Annales de Philosophie chrétienne, Nov. 1869.

for their satisfactory solution, the former has no materials at all. The ancient temples are destroyed, the names of the ancient deities are clean forgotten in many parts of the world where dialects, however changed, still keep up the tradition of the most distant ages.

But even if it were otherwise, the students of religion would, I think, do well to follow the example of the students of language, and to serve their first apprenticeship in a comparative study of the Aryan and Semitic religions. If it can be proved that the religions of the Aryan nations are united by the same bonds of a real relationship which have enabled us to treat their languages as so many varieties of the same type, and if the same fact can be established with reference to the Semitic world, the field thus opened is vast enough, and its careful clearing and cultivation will occupy several generations of scholars. And this original relationship, I believe, can be proved. Names of the principal deities, words also expressive of the most essential elements of religion, such as *prayer*, *sacrifice*, *altar*, *spirit*, *law*, and *faith*, have been preserved among the Aryan and among the

Semitic nations, and these relics admit of one explanation only. After that, a comparative study of the Turanian religions may be approached with better hope of success; for that there was not only a primitive Aryan and a primitive Semitic religion, but likewise a primitive Turanian religion, before each of these primeval races was broken up and became separated in language, worship, and national sentiment, admits, I believe, of little doubt.

Let us begin with our own ancestors, the Aryans. In a lecture which I delivered in this place some years ago, I drew a sketch of what the life of the Aryans must have been before their first separation, that is, before the time when Sanskrit was spoken in India, or Greek in Asia Minor and Europe. The outline of that sketch and the colours with which it was filled were simply taken from language. We argued that it would be possible, if we took all the words which exist in the same form in French, Italian, and Spanish, to show what words, and therefore what things, must have been known to the people who did not as yet speak French, Italian, and Spanish, but who spoke that lan-

guage which preceded these Romance dialects. We happen to know that language: it was Latin; but if we did not know a word of Latin or a single chapter of Roman history, we should still be able, by using the evidence of the words which are common to all the Romance languages, to draw some kind of picture of what the principal thoughts and occupations of those people must have been who lived in Italy a thousand years at least before the time of Charlemagne. We could easily prove that those people must have had *kings* and *laws*, *temples* and *palaces*, *ships* and *carriages*, *high roads* and *bridges*, and nearly all the ingredients of a highly civilised life. We could prove this, as I said, by simply taking the names of all these things as they occur in French, Spanish, and Italian, and by showing that as Spanish did not borrow them from French, or Italian from Spanish, they must have existed in that previous stratum of language from which these three modern Romance dialects took their origin.

Exactly the same kind of argument enabled us to put together a kind of mosaic picture of the earliest civilisation of the Aryan people

before the time of their separation. As we find in Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit, also in Slavonic, Celtic, and Teutonic, the same word for *house*, we are fully justified in concluding that before any of these languages had assumed a separate existence, a thousand years at least before Agamemnon and before Manu, the ancestors of the Aryan races were no longer dwellers in tents, but builders of permanent houses[1]. As we find the name for town the same in Sanskrit and Greek[2], we can conclude with equal certainty that towns were known to the Aryans before Greek and before Sanskrit was spoken. As we find the name for king the same in Sanskrit, Latin, Teutonic, and Celtic[3], we know again that kingly government was established and recognised by the Aryans at the same pre-historic period.

I must not allow myself to be tempted to draw the whole of that picture of primeval civilisation over again[4]. I only wish to call

[1] Sk. dama, δόμος, domus, Goth. timrjan, 'to build,' Sl. dom. Sk. veśa, οἶκος, vicus, Goth. veih-s.

[2] Sk. pur, purî, or puri, Gr. πόλις; Sk. vâstu, 'house,' Gr. ἄστυ.

[3] Sk. Râg, râgan, rex, Goth. reiks, Ir. riogh.

[4] See Chips from a German Workshop, vol. ii. p. 22 *seq.*

back to your recollection the fact that in exploring together the ancient archives of language, we found that the highest God had received the same name in the ancient mythology of India, Greece, Italy, and Germany, and had retained that name whether worshipped on the Himalayan mountains, or among the oaks of Dodona, on the Capitol, or in the forests of Germany. I pointed out that his name was *Dyaus* in Sanskrit, *Zeus* in Greek, *Jovis* in Latin, *Tiu* in German; but I hardly dwelt with sufficient strength on the startling nature of this discovery. These names are not mere names: they are historical facts, ay, facts more immediate, more trustworthy, than many facts of medieval history. These words are not mere words, but they bring before us, with all the vividness of an event which we witnessed ourselves but yesterday, the ancestors of the whole Aryan race, thousands of years it may be before Homer and the Veda, worshipping an unseen Being, under the selfsame name, the best, the most exalted name, they could find in their vocabulary—under the name of Light and Sky.

And let us not turn away, and say that this was after all but nature-worship and idolatry. No, it was not meant for that, though it may have been degraded into that in later times; *Dyaus* did not mean the blue sky, nor was it simply the sky personified: it was meant for something else. We have in the Veda the invocations *Dyaûs pitar*, the Greek Ζεῦ πάτερ, the Latin *Jupiter;* and that means in all the three languages what it meant before these three languages were torn asunder—it means Heaven-Father! These two words are not mere words; they are to my mind the oldest poem, the oldest prayer of mankind, or at least of that pure branch of it to which we belong—and I am as firmly convinced that this prayer was uttered, that this name was given to the unknown God before Sanskrit was Sanskrit and Greek was Greek, as, when I see the Lord's Prayer in the languages of Polynesia and Melanesia, I feel certain that it was first uttered in the language of Jerusalem. We little thought when we heard for the first time the name of Jupiter, degraded it may be by Homer or Ovid into a scolding husband or a faithless lover, what sacred records lay en-

shrined in this unholy name. We shall have to learn the same lesson again and again in the Science of Religion, viz. that the place whereon we stand is holy ground. Thousands of years have passed since the Aryan nations separated to travel to the North and the South, the West and the East: they have each formed their languages, they have each founded empires and philosophies, they have each built temples and razed them to the ground; they have all grown older, and it may be wiser and better; but when they search for a name for what is most exalted and yet most dear to every one of us, when they wish to express both awe and love, the infinite and the finite, they can but do what their old fathers did when gazing up to the eternal sky, and feeling the presence of a Being as far as far and as near as near can be: they can but combine the selfsame words, and utter once more the primeval Aryan prayer, Heaven-Father, in that form which will endure for ever, 'Our Father which art in heaven.'

Let us now turn to the early religion of the Semitic nations. The Semitic languages, it is well known, are even more closely connected

together than the Aryan languages, so much so that a comparative grammar of the Semitic languages seems to have but few of the attractions possessed by a comparative study of Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin. Semitic scholars complain that there is no work worth doing in comparing the grammars of Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic, for they have only to be placed side by side[1] in order to show their close relationship. I do not think this is quite true, and I still hope that M. Renan will carry out his original design, and, by including not only the literary branches of the Semitic family, but also the ancient dialects of Phenicia, Arabia, Babylon, and Nineveh, produce a comparative grammar of the Semitic languages that may hold its place by the side of Bopp's great work on the Comparative Grammar of the Aryan Languages.

But what is still more surprising to me is that no Semitic scholar should have followed the example of the Aryan scholars, and collected from the different Semitic dialects those

[1] See Bunsen's Christianity and Mankind, vol. iii. p. 246 *seq.*

common words which must have existed before Hebrew was Hebrew, before Syriac was Syriac, and before Arabic was Arabic, and from which some kind of idea might be formed as to what were the principal thoughts and occupations of the Semitic race in its earliest undivided state. The materials seem much larger and much more easily accessible[1]. The principal degrees of relationship, for instance, have common names among the Semitic as among the Aryan nations, and if it was important to show that the Aryans had named and recognised not only the natural members of a family, such as father and mother, son and daughter, brother and sister, but also the more distant members, the father and mother-in-law, the son and daughter-in-law, the brother and sister-in-law, would it not be of equal interest to show that the Semitic nations had reached the same degree of civilisation long before the time of the laws of Moses?

Confining ourselves to the more immediate object of our researches, we see without

[1] See Bunsen's Christianity and Mankind, vol. iii. p. 246, iv. p. 345.

difficulty, that the Semitic, like the Aryan languages, possess a number of names of the Deity in common, which must have existed before the *Southern* or *Arabic*, the *Northern* or *Aramaic*, the *Middle* or *Hebraic* branches became permanently separated, and which, therefore, allow us an insight into the religious conceptions of the once united Semitic race long before Jehovah was worshipped by Abraham, or Baal was invoked in Phenicia, or El in Babylon.

It is true, as I pointed out before, that the meaning of many of these names is more general than the original meaning of the names of the Aryan gods. Many of them signify *Powerful*, *Venerable*, *Exalted*, *King*, *Lord*, and they might seem, therefore, like honorific titles, to have been given independently by the different branches of the Semitic family to the gods whom they worshipped each in their own sanctuaries. But if we consider how many words there were in the Semitic languages to express greatness, strength, or lordship, the fact that the same appellatives occur as the proper names of the deity in Syria, in Carthage, in Babylon, and in Palestine, admits of

one historical explanation only. There must have been a time for the Semitic as well as for the Aryan races, when they fixed the names of their deities, and that time must have preceded the formation of their separate languages and separate religions.

One of the oldest names of the deity among the ancestors of the Semitic nations was *El.* It meant Strong. It occurs in the Babylonian inscriptions as Ilu, God[1], and in the very name of Bab-il, the gate or temple of Il. In Hebrew it occurs both in its general sense of strong or hero, and as a name of God. We have it in *Beth-el*, the house of God, and in many other names. If used with the article as *ha-El*, the Strong One, or the God, it always is meant in the Old Testament for Jehovah, the true God. El, however, always retained its appellative power, and we find it applied therefore, in parts of the Old Testament, to the gods of the gentiles also.

The same El was worshipped at Byblus by the Phenicians, and he was called there the

[1] Schrader, in the Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, vol. xxiii. p. 350.

son of Heaven and Earth[1]. His father was the son of *Eliun*, the most high God, who had been killed by wild animals. The son of Eliun, who succeeded him, was dethroned, and at last slain by his own son *El*, whom Philo identifies with the Greek Kronos, and represents as the presiding deity of the planet Saturn[2]. In the Himyaritic inscriptions, too, the name of El has been discovered[3].

With the name of *El*, Philo connected the name of *Elohîm*, the plural of *Eloah*. In the battle between *El* and his father, the allies of *El*, he says, were called *Elocim*, as those who were with *Kronos* were called *Kronioi*[4]. This is, no doubt, a very tempting etymology of *Eloah;* but as the best Semitic scholars, and

[1] Bunsen, Egypt, iv. 187. Fragmenta Hist. Græc., vol. iii. p. 567.

[2] Fragmenta Hist. Græc. vol. iii. pp. 567–571. That El is the presiding deity of the planet Saturn according to the Chaldeans is also confirmed by Diodorus Siculus, ii. pp. 30–33.

[3] Osiander, Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, vol. x. p. 61.

[4] Fragmenta Hist. Græc. vol. iii. p. 568, 18. οἱ δὲ σύμμαχοι Ἥλου τοῦ Κρόνου Ἐλοεὶμ ἐπεκλήθησαν, ὡς ἂν Κρόνιοι οὗτοι ἦσαν οἱ λεγόμενοι ἐπὶ Κρόνου.

particularly Professor Fleischer, have declared against it, we shall have, however reluctantly, to surrender it.

Eloah is the same word as the Arabic, *Ilâh*, God. In the singular, *Eloah* is used in the Bible synonymously with *El;* in the plural it may mean gods in general, or false gods, but it becomes in the Old Testament the recognised name of the true God, plural in form, but singular in meaning. In Arabic, *Ilâh*, without the article, means a God in general: with the article, Al-Ilâh, or Allâh[1], becomes the name of the God of Mohammed, as it was the name of the God of Abraham and of Moses.

The origin of *Eloah* or *Ilâh* has been frequently discussed by European as well as by native scholars. The Kamús says that there were twenty, Mohammad El Fási that there were thirty, opinions about it. Professor Fleischer[2], whose judgment in such matters

[1] إِلَاهٌ, أَلَاهٌ, أَلِلَاهٌ, إِلَاهٌ.

[2] See a note by Professor Fleischer in Delitzsch, Commentar über die Genesis, 3rd ed., 1860, p. 64; also Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, vol. x. p. 60; and Sitzungsberichte der königl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, Philosoph. Hist. Classe, vol. xviii.

we may trust implicitly, traces *El*, the strong one, back to a root *âl* (with middle vav, aval), to be thick and dense, to be fleshy and strong. But he takes *Eloah* or *Ilâh* for an abstract noun, in the sense of fear, derived from a totally different root, viz. *alah*, to be agitated, confounded, perplexed. From meaning fear, *Eloah* came to mean the object of fear or reverence, and thus became a name of God. In the same way we find *pachad*, which means fear, used in the sense of God; Gen. xxxi. 42 —'Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac had been with me.' And again, v. 53—'And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac.' In Aramaic, *dachlâ*, fear, is the recognised name for God or for an idol.

The same ancient name appears also in its feminine form as *Allât*[1]. Her famous temple at *T*âïf, in Arabia, was second only in im-

(1866), pp. 290–292. Dr. W. Wright adopts Professor Fleischer's derivation; likewise Professor Kuenen in his work, De Godsdienst van Israel, p. 45.

[1] Osiander, Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, vii. 479–482, اللات Allāt, goddess, is contracted from الإلاهة Al-Ilāhat.

portance to the sanctuary at Mekkah, and was destroyed at the command of Mohammed. The worship of *Allât*, however, was not confined to this one place; and there can be no doubt that the Arabian goddess *Alilat*, mentioned by Herodotus[1], is the same as the *Allât* of the Korân.

Another famous name of the deity, traces of which can be found among most of the Semitic nations, is *Baal*, or *Bel*. The Assyrians and Babylonians[2], the Phenicians[3] and Carthaginians, the Moabites and Philistines, and, we must add, the Jews also, all knew of *Bel* or *Baal* as a great, or even as the supreme God. Baal can hardly be considered as a strange and foreign god in the eyes of the Jewish people, who, in spite of the protests of the Hebrew prophets, worshipped him so constantly in the groves of Jerusalem. He was

[1] Herod. iii. 8. Ὀνομάζουσι (οἱ Ἀράβιοι) τὸν μὲν Διόνισον Ὀροτάλ, τὴν δὲ Οὐρανίην Ἀλιλάτ. In Herod. i. 131, 138, this name is corrupted to Ἄλιττα. See Osiander, Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, vol. ii. pp. 482, 483.

[2] Fragmenta Hist. Græc. vol. ii. p. 498, 2.

[3] Ibid. vol. iii. p. 568, 21.

felt by them almost as a home deity, or, at all events, as a Semitic deity, and among the gods whom the fathers served on the other side of the flood, Bel held most likely a very prominent place. Though originally *one*[1], Baal became divided into many divine personalities through the influence of local worship. We hear of a Baal-tsur, Baal-tsidon, Baal-tars, originally the Baal of Tyre, of Sidon, and Tarsus. On two candelabra found in the island of Malta we read the Phenician dedication to 'Melkarth, the Baal of Tyre.' At Shechem Baal was worshipped as *Baal-berith*[2], supposed to mean the god of treaties; at Ekron the Philistines worshipped him as *Baal-zebub*[3], the lord of flies, while the Moabites, and the Jews too, knew him also by the name of *Baal-peor*[4]. On Phenician coins Baal is called Bâal Shâmayîm, the Baal of heaven, which is the *Beelsamên* of Philo, identified by him with the sun[5]. 'When

[1] M. de Vogüé, Journal Asiatique, 1867, p. 135.

[2] Judges viii. 33; ix. 4. [3] 2 Kings i. 2, 3, 16.

[4] Numbers xxv.

[5] Fragmenta Hist. Græc. vol. iii. p. 565, 5. It is impossible to change ἥλιον into ἦλον, because El or Kronos is mentioned afterwards.

the heat became oppressive, the ancient races of Phenicia,' he says, 'lifted their hand heavenward to the sun. For him they considered the only God, the lord of heaven, calling him Beelsamên[1], which with the Phenicians is lord of heaven, and with the Greeks Zeus.' We likewise hear of *Baalîm*, or many Baals or gods. And in the same way as by the side of the male *Ilâh* or *Allâh* we found a female *Allât*, we also find by the side of the male Baal, a female deity *Baalt*, the Baaltis of the Phenicians. It may be that the original conception of female deities differs among Semitic and Aryan nations, and that these feminine forms of *Allâh* and *Baal* were at first intended only to express the energy or activity, or the collective powers of the deity, not a separate being, least of all a wife. This opinion[2] is certainly confirmed when we see that in a Carthaginian inscription the goddess *Tanit* is called *the face of Baal*[3], and that in the

[1] Is this the same as Barsamus, mentioned by Moses of Chorene (Hist. Arm. vol. i. p. 13) as a deified hero worshipped by the Syrians? Or is Barsamus the Son of Heaven? See Rawlinson, Ancient Monarchies, vol. i. p. 116.

[2] De Vogüé, l. c. p. 138.

[3] פְּנוּאֵל, cf. פְּנֵי־בַעַל.

inscription of Eshmunazar, the Sidonian Astarte is called the *name of Baal*[1]. In course of time, however, this abstract idea was supplanted by that of a female power, and even a wife, and as such we find *Baaltis* worshipped by Phenicians[2], Babylonians, and Assyrians[3], for the name of Mylitta in Herodotus[4] is, according to Dr. Oppert, a mere corruption of Baaltis.

Another female goddess is *Ashtoreth*, a name which presupposes a masculine deity, *Ashtar*. Traces of this god or goddess have been discovered in the *Ishtar* of the Babylonian inscriptions, in a Palmyrene inscription, and in the Ashtar of the Moabite stone. The female deity, however, became predominant, and was worshipped, not only by Carthaginians, Phenicians, and Philistines, but likewise by the Jews[5] when they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth[6]. The Syrians called her Astarte, and by that ominous name she became known to Greeks and Romans. When Jeremiah speaks

[1] שֵׁם־בעל, cf. שֵׁם יהוה.

[2] Fragmenta Hist. Græc. vol. iii. p. 569, 25.

[3] Ibid. vol. iv. p. 283, 9.

[4] Herod. i. 131, 199.

[5] 1 Kings xi. 5.

[6] Judges iii. 12.

of the Queen of Heaven[1], this can only be meant for Astarte, or Baaltis. Even in Southern Arabia there are traces of the worship of this ancient goddess. For in Sanâ, the ancient capital of the Himyaritic kingdom, there was a magnificent palace and temple dedicated to Venus (Bait Ghumdân), and the name of *Athtar* has been read in the Himyaritic inscriptions: nay, it is preceded in one place by the verb in the masculine gender[2].

Another word, meaning originally king, which must have been fixed upon as a name of the Deity in pre-historic times, is the Hebrew *Melech*. We find it in *Moloch*, who was worshipped, not only in Carthage, in the Islands of Crete and Rhodes, but likewise in the valley of Hinnom. We find the same word in *Milcom*, the god of the Ammonites, who had a sanctuary in Mount Olivet; and the gods *Adrammelech* and *Anammelech*, to whom the Sepharvites burnt their children in the fire[3].

[1] Jer. vii. 18, מְלֶכֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם.

[2] Osiander, l. c. p. 472. Gildemeister, Zeitsch. der D. M. G. vol. xxiv. pp. 180, 181; Lenormant, Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Acad. des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres de l'année 1867; Levy, Zeitschrift der D. M. G. vol. xxiv. p. 189.

[3] 2 Kings xvii. 31.

seem again but local varieties of the same ancient Semitic idol.

Adonái, which in Hebrew means my lord, and in the Old Testament is used exclusively of Jehovah, appears in Phenicia as the name of the Supreme Deity, and after undergoing manifold mythological transformations, the same name has become familiar to us through the Greek tales about the beautiful young Adonis, loved by Aphrodite, and killed by the wild boar of Ares.

Elyôn, which in Hebrew means the Highest, is used in the Old Testament as a predicate of God. It occurs also by itself as a name of Jehovah. Melchizedek is called emphatically the priest of *El Elyon*, the priest of the most high God.

But this name again is not restricted to Hebrew. It occurs in the Phenician cosmogony as *Eliun*, the highest God, the Father of Heaven, who was the father of *El*. Dr. Oppert has identified this Eliun with the *Illinus* mentioned by Damascius.

Another word used in the Bible, sometimes in combination with El, and more frequently alone, as a name of the supreme deity, is *Shad-*

dai[1], the Powerful. It comes from a kindred root to that which has yielded the substantive *Shed*, meaning demon in the language of the Talmud, and the plural *Shedim*, a name for false gods or idols in the Old Testament. This name occurs as *Set* or *Sed* in the hieroglyphic inscriptions[2]. It is there the name of a god introduced by the shepherds, and one of his surnames is given as *Baal*. The same deity *Shaddai*, the Powerful, has, by a clever conjecture, been discovered as one of the deities worshipped by the ancient Phenicians[3].

While these names of the Deity and some others are shared in common by all, or by the most important members of the Semitic family, and must therefore have existed previous to the first Semitic separation, there are others peculiar to each branch.

Thus the name of Jehovah, or *Jahveh*[4], as

[1] שׁדי, or אֵל שַׁדַּי.

[2] De Vogüé, l. c. p. 160. See, however, Lepsius, Der erste Aeg. Götterkreis, p. 48.

[3] Bunsen, Egypt, iv. 221. De Vogüé, Mélanges d'Archéologie, p. 77.

[4] Theodoret. Quæst. xv. ad Exodum (420 A. D.): καλοῦσι δὲ αὐτὸ Σαμαρεῖται IABE, Ἰουδαῖοι δὲ IAΩ. Diod. Sic. i. 94 (59 B. C.): παρὰ δὲ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις Μωυσῆν τὸν Ἰαὼ ἐπικαλούμενον θεόν, κ.τ.λ.

it seems originally to have been pronounced, seems to me to be a divine name peculiar to the Jews. It is true that in a well-known passage of Lydus, IAO[1] is said to have been the name of God among the Chaldæans. But granting that IAO was the same word as Jahveh or Jehovah or Jah (as in Hallelu-jah), may not Lydus by the Chaldæans have simply meant the Jews? If, as Sir Henry Rawlinson maintains, the name of Jehovah occurred in the Babylonian inscriptions, the case would be different; we should then have to admit that this name, too, was fixed before the Semitic family was broken up. We should no longer be justified in claiming *Jehovah* as a name of the Deity peculiar to Hebrew, but only as fixed by the Hebrew prophets in the sense of the one true God, opposed to all the other gods of the Semitic race[2].

[1] Lydus, De Mensibus, iv. 38, 14: Οἱ Χαλδαῖοι τὸν θεὸν ΙΑΩ λέγουσι, ἀντὶ τοῦ φῶς νοητόν· τῇ Φοινίκων γλώσσῃ καὶ ΣΑΒΑΩΘ δὲ πολλαχοῦ λέγεται, οἷον ὁ ὑπὲρ τοὺς ἑπτὰ πόλους, τουτέστιν ὁ δημιουργός. Bunsen, Egypt, iv. 193; Renan, Sanchoniathon, p. 44, note. And see Diodorus Siculus, i. 94, 2.

[2] Lobeck, Aglaophamus, p. 461. Sir H. Rawlinson has

But whether we include or exclude the name of Jehovah, we have, I think, sufficient witnesses to establish that there was a period during which the ancestors of the Semitic family had not yet been divided in language and religion. That period transcends the recollection of every one of the Semitic races in the same way as neither Hindus, Greeks, nor Romans have any recollection of the time when they spoke a common language, and worshipped their Father in heaven by a name that was as yet neither Sanskrit, nor Greek, nor Latin. But I do not hesitate to call this pre-historic period historical in the best sense of the word. It was a real period, because, unless it was real, all the realities of the Semitic languages and the Semitic religions, such as we find them after their separation,

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kindly informed me that he doubts whether Yahu, which occurs in the sense of God in the Assyrian inscriptions, belonged properly to the Assyrian language. He thinks that it may have been borrowed from Syria, and adopted with the language, as were many other foreign terms. Professor Schrader, as Mr. Cheyne tells me, accepts Yahu as an Assyrian word, and supposes that the Hamathites adopted the name into their Pantheon.

would be unintelligible. Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic point to a common source as much as Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin; and unless we can bring ourselves to doubt that the Hindus, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Teutons derived the worship of their principal deity from their common Aryan sanctuary, we shall not be able to deny that there was likewise a primitive religion of the whole Semitic race, and that *El*, the Strong One in heaven, was invoked by the ancestors of all the Semitic races, before there were Babylonians in Babylon, Phenicians in Sidon and Tyrus, before there were Jews in Mesopotamia or Jerusalem. The evidence of the Semitic is the same as that of the Aryan languages: the conclusion cannot be different.

We now come to the third nucleus of language, and, as I hope to show, of religion also—that which forms the foundation of the Turanian world. The subject is extremely difficult, and I confess I doubt whether I shall succeed in engaging your sympathy in favour of the religious opinions of people so strange, so far removed from us, as the Chinese, the Mongolians, the Samoyedes, the Finns, and

Lapps. We naturally take an interest in the ancient history of the Aryan and Semitic nations, for, after all, we are ourselves Aryan in language, and Semitic, at least to a certain extent, in religion. But what have we in common with the Turanians, with Chinese and Samoyedes? Very little, it may seem; and yet it is not very little, for it is our common humanity. It is not the yellow skin and the high cheekbones that make the man. Nay, if we look but steadily into those black Chinese eyes, we shall find that there, too, there is a soul that responds to a soul, and that the God whom they *mean* is the same God whom we *mean*, however helpless their utterance, however imperfect their worship.

If we take the religion of China as the earliest representative of Turanian worship, the question is, whether we can find any names of the Deity in Chinese which appear again in the religions and mythologies of other Turanian tribes, such as the Mandshus, the Mongolians, the Tatars, or Finns. I confess that, considering the changing and shifting character of the Turanian languages, considering also the

long interval of time that must have passed between the first linguistic and religious settlement in China, and the later gradual and imperfect consolidation of the other Turanian races, I was not very sanguine in my expectation that any such names as *Dyaus pitar* among the Aryans, or *El* and *Baal* among the Shemites, could have survived in the religious traditions of the vast Turanian world. However, there is no reason why we should not look for such names in Chinese, Mongolian, and Turkish; still less, why we should pass them by with indifference or incredulity because, from the very nature of the case, their coincidence is not so striking and convincing as that of the Semitic and Aryan names of the Deity. There are in researches of this kind different degrees of certainty, and I am the very last person to slur them over, and to represent all our results as equally certain. But if we want to arrive at *terra firma*, we must not mind a plunge now and then; and if we wish to mount a ladder, we must not be afraid of taking the first step. The coincidences between the religious phraseology of Chinese and other Turanian languages are cer-

tainly not like the coincidences between Greek and Sanskrit, or between Hebrew and Phenician; but they are such that they ought not to be neglected by the pioneers of a new science.

You remember that the popular worship of ancient China was a worship of single spirits, of powers, or, we might almost say, of names; the names of the most prominent powers of nature which are supposed to exercise an influence for good or evil on the life of man. We find a belief in spirits of the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the mountains, the rivers; to say nothing as yet of the spirits of the departed.

In China, where there always has been a strong tendency towards order and regularity, some kind of system has been superinduced by the recognition of two powers, one active, the other passive, one male, the other female, which comprehend everything, and which, in the mind of the more enlightened, tower high above the great crowd of minor spirits. These two powers are within and beneath and behind everything that is double in nature, and they have frequently been identified with heaven and earth.

We can clearly see, however, that the spirit of heaven occupied from the beginning a much higher position than the spirit of the earth. It is in the historical books only, in the Shu-king[1], that we are told that heaven and earth together are the father and mother of all things. In the ancient poetry Heaven alone is both father and mother[2]. This spirit of heaven is known in Chinese by the name of *Tien*, and wherever in other religions we should expect the name of the supreme deity, whether Jupiter or Allah, we find in Chinese the name of *Tien* or sky. This *Tien*, according to the Imperial Dictionary of Kanghee, means the Great One, he that dwells on high and regulates all below. We see in fact that *Tien*, originally the name of sky, has passed in Chinese through nearly all the phases, from the lowest to the highest, through which the

[1] In the Shu-king (3, 11) Tien is called Shang-tien, or High Heaven, which is synonymous with Shang-te, High Spirit, another very common name of the supreme deity. The Confucians never made any image of Shang-te, but the Tao-sse represented their (Yah-hwang) Shang-te under the human form.—Medhurst, Inquiry, p. 46.

[2] Chalmers, Origin of the Chinese, p. 14; Medhurst, l. c. p. 124; contrast between Shin and Shangti.

Aryan name for sky, *dyaus*, passed in the poetry, the religion, the mythology, and philosophy of India and Greece. The sign of *tien* in Chinese is 天, and this is compounded of two signs: 大 *ta*, which means *great*, and 一 *yih*, which means *one*. The sky, therefore, was conceived as the One, the Peerless, and as the Great, the High, the Exalted. I remember reading in a Chinese book, 'As there is but one sky, how can there be many gods?' In fact, their belief in *Tien*, the spirit of heaven, moulded the whole of the religious phraseology of the Chinese. 'The glorious heaven,' we read, 'is called bright, it accompanies you wherever you go; the glorious heaven is called luminous, it goes wherever you roam.' *Tien* is called the ancestor of all things; the highest that is above. He is called the great framer, who makes things as a potter frames an earthen vessel. The Chinese also speak of the decrees and the will of Heaven, of the steps of Heaven or Providence. The sages who teach the people are sent by heaven, and Confucius himself is said to have been used by heaven as the 'alarum' of the world. The same Confucius, when on the brink of despondency, because

no one would believe in him, knows of one comfort only; that comfort is: 'Heaven knows me.' It is clear from many passages that with Confucius *Tien* or the Spirit of Heaven was the supreme deity, and that he looked upon the other gods of the people, the spirits of the air, the mountains and the rivers, the spirits also of the departed, very much with the same feelings with which Sokrates regarded the mythological deities of Greece. Thus when asked on one occasion how the spirits should be served, he replied: 'If we are not able to serve men, how can we serve the spirits?' And at another time he said, in his short and significant manner: 'Respect the Gods, and keep them at a distance[1].'

We have now to see whether we can find any traces of this belief in a supreme spirit of heaven among the other branches of the Turanian class, the Mandshus, Mongolians, Tatars, Finns, or Lapps. As there are many names for sky in the Turanian dialects, it would not be absolutely necessary that we should find

[1] Medhurst, Reply to Dr. Boone, p. 32.

the same name which we found in Chinese: yet, if traces of that name could be found among Mongolians and Tatars, our argument would, no doubt, gain far greater strength. It is the same in all researches of comparative mythology. If we find the same conceptions, the same myths and legends, in India, Greece, Italy, and Germany, there is, no doubt, some presumption in favour of their common origin, but no more. But if we meet with gods and heroes, having the same names in the mythology of the Veda, and in the mythology of Greece and Rome and Germany, we stand on firmer ground. We have then to deal with real facts that cannot be disputed, and all that remains is to explain them.

In Turanian mythology, however, such facts are not easily brought together. With the exception of China, we know very little of the ancient history of the Turanian races, and what we know of their present state comes frequently from prejudiced observers. Besides, their old heathendom is fast disappearing before the advance of Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. Yet if we take the accounts of the most trustworthy travellers in

Central and Northern Asia, and more particularly the careful observations of Castrén, we cannot but recognise some most striking coincidences in the scattered notices of the religion of the Tungusic, Mongolic, Tataric, and Finnic tribes. Everywhere we find a worship of the spirits of nature, of the spirits of the departed, though behind and above it there rises the belief in some higher power, known by different names, sometimes called the Father, the Old One, who is the Maker and Protector of the world, and who always resides in heaven.

Chinese historians are the only writers who give us an account of the earlier history of some of these Turanian tribes, particularly of the Huns, whom they call *Hiongnu*, and of the Turks, whom they call *Tukiu*. They relate[1] that the Huns worshipped the sun, the moon, the spirits of the sky and the earth, and the spirits of the departed, and that their priests, the Shamans, possessed a power over the clouds, being able to bring down snow, hail, rain, and wind[2].

[1] Castrén, Vorlesungen über Finnische Mythologie, p. 2.
[2] Ibid. l. c. p. 36.

Menander, a Byzantine historian, relates of the Turks that in his time they worshipped the fire, the water, and the earth, but that at the same time they believed in a God, the maker of the world, and offered to him sacrifices of camels, oxen, and sheep.

Still later we get some information from medieval travellers, such as Plano Carpini and Marco Polo, who say that the Mongol tribes paid great reverence to the sun, the fire, and the water, but that they believed also in a great and powerful God, whom they called *Natagai* (Natigay) or *Itoga.*

In modern times we have chiefly to depend on Castrén, who had eyes to see and ears to hear what few other travellers would have seen or heard, or understood. Speaking of the Tungusic tribes, he says, 'they worship the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, fire, the spirits of forests, rivers, and certain sacred localities; they worship even images and fetishes, but with all this they retain a faith in a supreme being which they call *Buga*[1].' 'The Samoyedes,' he says, 'worship idols and

[1] Is this the Russian 'bog,' god?

various natural objects; but they always profess a belief in a higher divine power which they call *Num*.'

This deity which is called *Num* is also called *Juma* by the Samoyedes[1], and is in fact the same deity which in the grand mythology of Finland is known under the name of *Jumala*. The mythology of Finland has been more carefully preserved than the mythologies of all the other Altaic races, and in their ancient epic poems which have been kept up by oral tradition for centuries, and have been written down but very lately, we have magnificent descriptions of *Jumala*, the deity of the sky.

Jumala meant originally the sky. It is derived, as Castrén has shown (p. 24), from *Juma*, thunder, and *la*, the place, meaning therefore the place of thunder, or the sky. It is used first of all for sky, secondly for god of the sky, and thirdly for gods in general. The very same word, only modified according to the phonetic rules of each language, occurs among the Lapps (p. 11), the Esthonians, the Syrjanes, the Tcheremissians, and the Votyakes (p. 24).

[1] Castrén, l. c. p. 13.

We can watch the growth and the changes of this heavenly deity as we catch a glimpse here and there of the religious thoughts of the Altaic tribes. An old Samoyede woman who was asked by Castrén (p. 16) whether she ever said her prayers, replied: 'Every morning I step out of my tent and bow before the sun, and say: "When thou risest, I, too, rise from my bed." And every evening I say: "When thou sinkest down, I, too, sink down to rest."' That was her prayer, perhaps the whole of her religious service;—a poor prayer it may seem to us, but not to her: for it made that old woman look twice at least every day away from earth and up to heaven; it implied that her life was bound up with a larger and higher life; it encircled the daily routine of her earthly existence with something of a divine halo. She herself was evidently proud of it, for she added, with a touch of self-righteousness: 'There *are* wild people who never say their morning and evening prayers.'

As in this case the deity of the sky is represented, as it were, by the sun, we see Jumala, under different circumstances, conceived as the

deity of the sea. When walking one evening with a Samoyede sailor along the coast of the Polar Sea, Castrén asked him: 'Tell me, where is Num?' (i.e. Jumala.) Without a moment's hesitation the old sailor pointed to the dark, distant sea, and said: '*He is there.*'

Again, in the epic poem Kalevála, when the hostess of Pohjola is in labour, she calls on Jumala, and says: 'Come now into the bath, Jumala, into the warmth, O Lord of the air!' (p. 19.)

At another time Jumala is the god of the air, and is invoked in the following lines (p. 21):

> Harness now thyself, Jumala,
> Ruler of the air, thy horses!
> Bring them forth, thy rapid racers,
> Drive the sledge with glittering colours,
> Passing through our bones, our ankles,
> Through our flesh that shakes and trembles,
> Through our veins which seem all broken.
> Knit the flesh and bones together,
> Fasten vein to vein more firmly.
> Let our joints be filled with silver,
> Let our veins with gold be running!

In all these cases the deity invoked is the same, it is the deity of the sky, Jumala; but so indefinite is his character, that we can hardly say whether he is the god of the sky, or the

sun, or the sea, or the air, or whether he is a supreme deity reflected in all these aspects of nature.

However, you will naturally ask, where is there any similarity between the name of that deity and the Chinese deity of the sky, *Tien?* The common worship of *Jumala* may prove some kind of religious concentration among the different Altaic nations in the North of Asia, but it does not prove any pre-historic community of worship between those nations and the ancient inhabitants of China. It is true that the Chinese *Tien*, with its three meanings of sky, god of the sky, and god in general, is the exact counterpart of the North Turanian Jumala; but still we want more; we want, if possible, traces of the same name of the deity in China, in Mongolia, and Tatary, just as we found the name of Jupiter in India and Italy, and the name of El in Babylon and Palestine.

Well, let us remember that Chinese is a monosyllabic language, and that the later Turanian dialects have entered into the agglutinative stage, that is to say, that they use derivative suffixes, and we shall then without

much difficulty discover traces of the Chinese word *Tien*, with all its meanings, among some at least of the most important of the Turanian races. In the Mongolian language we find *Teng-ri*[1], and this means, first, sky; then, god of the sky; then, god in general; and lastly, spirit or demon, whether good or bad.

I think you will see the important bearing of this discovery, for it clinches the argument as nothing else could have clinched it. Unless we had found the same name of the supreme deity in the hymns of the Veda and in the prayer of the priestesses at Dodona, we could not have forced the conviction that it was originally one and the same conception of divine personality which had been worshipped long before the Hindus had entered India, or the dove had alighted on the head of Dodona. The same applies to the Chinese *Tien* and the Mongolian *Tengri*.

And this is not all. By a fortunate accident the Turanian name of *Tengri* can be traced back from the modern Mongolian to an earlier

[1] Turkish 'tangry' (طانكرى or تكرى, teñri), the Yakute 'tangara.'

period. Chinese authors, in their accounts of the early history of the Huns, tell us that the title given by the Huns to their leaders was *tangli-kutu* (or tchen-jü[1]). This *tangli-kutu* meant in their language Son of Heaven, and you will remember that the same name, Son of Heaven, is still given to the Chinese Emperor[2]. It does not mean Son of God, but Emperor by the grace of God. Now the Chinese title is *tien-tze*, corresponding to the Hunnish *tangli-kutu*. Hence Hunnish *tang-li*, or Mongolian *tengri*, are the same as the Chinese *Tien*.

Again, in the historical accounts which the Chinese give of the *Tukiu*, the ancestors of the Turks, it is said that they worshipped the Spirits of the Earth, and that they called these spirits *pu-teng-i-li*. Here the first syllable must be intended for earth, while in *teng-i-li* we have again the same word as the Mongolian *tengri*, only used, even at that early time, no longer in the sense of heaven, or god of heaven, but as a name of gods and spirits in general. We

[1] Schott, Ueber das Altaische Sprachgeschlecht, p. 9.
[2] Schott, Chinesische Literatur, p. 63.

find a similar transition of meaning in the modern Yakute word *tangara*. It means the sky, and it means God; but among the Christian converts in Siberia, *tangara* is also used to signify 'the Saints.' The wild reindeer is called in Yakute 'God's reindeer,' because it lives in the open air, or because God alone takes care of it.

Here, then, we have the same kind of evidence which enabled us to establish a primitive Aryan and a primitive Semitic religion: we have a common name, and this name given to the highest deity, preserved in the monosyllabic language of China, and in the cognate, though agglutinative, dialects of some of the principal North Turanian tribes. We find in these words, not merely a vague similarity of sound and meaning, but, by watching their growth in Chinese, Mongolian, and Turkish, we are able to discover in them traces of organic identity. Everywhere they begin with the meaning of sky, they rise to the meaning of God, and they sink down again to the meaning of gods and spirits. The changes in the meaning of these words run parallel with the changes that took place in the re-

ligions of these nations, which in China, as elsewhere, combine the worship of numberless spirits with the belief in a supreme heavenly deity.

Did we allow ourselves to be guided by mere similarity of sound and meaning, it would be easy to connect the name given to the highest deity by the Samoyedes, *Num*, which is the same word as the Finnish *Juma(la)*, with the name used for God in the language of Tibet, *Nam*. This might seem a most important link, because it would help us to establish an original identity of religion among members of the North and South Turanian branches. But till we know something of the antecedents of the Tibetan word, till we know, as I said before, its organic growth, we cannot think of using it for such purposes.

If we now turn for a moment to the minor spirits believed in by the large masses in China, we shall easily see that they, too, in their character are strikingly like the spirits worshipped by the North Turanian tribes. These spirits in Chinese are called *Shin*[1],

[1] Medhurst, Reply, p. 11.

which is really the name given to every invisible power or influence which can be perceived in operation in the universe. Some *Shin* or spirits receive real worship, which is graduated according to their dignity; others are looked upon with fear. The spirits of pestilence are driven out and dispersed by exorcism; many are only talked about. There are so many spirits that it seems impossible to fix their exact number. The principal classes[1] are the celestial spirits (*tien shin*), the terrestrial spirits (*ti ki*), and the ancestral spirits (*jin kwei*), and this is the order[2] in which they are ranked according to their dignity. Among celestial spirits (*tien shin*) we find the spirits of the sun and the moon and the stars, the clouds, wind, thunder, and rain; among terrestrial spirits, those of the mountains, the fields, the grain, the rivers, the trees, the year. Among the departed spirits are those of the emperors, the sages, and other public benefactors, which are to be revered by

[1] Medhurst, Reply, l. c. p. 21.

[2] Ibid. l. c. p. 22. The spirits of heaven are called *shin*; the spirits of earth are called *ki*; when men die, their wandering and transformed souls and spirits are called *kwei*.

the whole nation, while each family has its own *manes* which are treated with special reverence and honoured by many superstitious rites[1].

The same state of religious feeling is exhibited among the North Turanian tribes, only without those minute distinctions and regulations in which the Chinese mind delights. The Samoyedes, as we saw, believed in a supreme god of heaven, called *Num;* but Castrén, who lived so long among them, says: 'The chief deities invoked by their priests or sorcerers, the Shamans, are the so-called *Tadebejos*[2], invisible spirits dwelling in the air, the earth, the water, and everywhere in nature. I have heard many a Samoyede say that they were merely the spirits of the departed, but others look upon them as a class of inferior deities.'

The same scholar tells us (p. 105) that 'the mythology of the Finns is flooded with names

[1] Medhurst, Reply, i. p. 43. The great sacrifices are offered only to *Te* or *Shang-te,* the same as *Tien.* The five *Te* which used to be joined with *Shang-te* at the great border sacrifice were only the five powers or qualities of *Shang-te* personified. Since the year A.D. 1369 the worship of these five *Te* has been abolished.

[2] Castrén, Finnische Mythologie, p. 122.

of deities. Every object in nature has a genius, called *haltia*, which is supposed to be its creator and protector. These spirits were not tied to these outward objects, but were free to roam about, and had a body and soul, and their own well-marked personality. Nor did their existence depend on the existence of a single object; for though there was no object in nature without a genius, the genius was not confined to any single object, but comprehended the whole class or genus. This mountain-ash, this stone, this house has its own genius, but the same genius cares for all other mountain-ashes, stones, and houses.'

We have only to translate this into the language of logic, and we shall understand at once what has happened here as elsewhere in the growth of religious ideas and mythological names. What we call a general concept, or what used to be called '*essentia generalis*,' 'the tree-hood,' 'the stone-hood,' 'the house-hood,' in fact, the genus tree, stone, and house, is what the Finns and Samoyedes call the genius, the *haltia*, the *tadebejo*, and what the Chinese call *Shin*. We speak very glibly of an *essentia generalis*, but to the unschooled mind this was

too great an effort. Something substantial and individual had to be retained when trees had to be spoken of as a forest, or days as a year; and in this transition period from individual to general conceptions, from the intuitional to the conceptual, from the real to the abstract, the shadow, the ghost, the power or the spirit of the forest, of the year, of the clouds, and the lightning, took possession of the human mind, and a class of beings was called into existence which stands before us as so-called deities in the religion and mythology of the ancient world.

The worship of ancestral spirits is likewise shared in common by the North Turanian races and the Chinese. I do not lay much stress on that fact, because the worship of the spirits of the departed is perhaps the most widely spread form of natural superstition all over the world. It is important, however, to observe that on this point also, which has always been regarded as most characteristic of Chinese religion, there is no difference between China and Northern Asia. Most of the Finnish and Altaic tribes, says Castrén (p. 119), cherish a belief that death, which they look

upon with terrible fear, does not entirely destroy individual existence. And even those who do not profess belief in a future life, observe certain ceremonies which show that they think of the departed as still existing. They take food, dresses, oxen, knives, tinder-boxes, kettles, and sledges, and place them on the graves; nay, if pressed, they would confess that this is done to enable the departed to hunt, to fish, and to fight, as they used to do when alive. Lapps and Finns admit that the body decays, but they imagine that a new body is given to the dead in the lower world. Others speak of the departed as ghosts or spirits, who either stay in the grave or in the realm of the dead, or who roam about on earth, particularly in the dead of night, and during storm and rain. They give signs of themselves in the howling of the wind, the rustling of leaves, the crackling of the fire, and in a thousand other ways. They are invisible to ordinary mortals, but the sorcerers or Shamans can see them, and can even divine their thoughts. It is curious that in general these spirits are supposed to be mischievous; and the most mischievous of all are the spirits

of the departed priests (p. 123). They interrupt the sleep, they send illness and misfortunes, and they trouble the conscience of their relatives. Everything is done to keep them away. When the corpse has been carried out of the house, a redhot stone is thrown after the departed, as a charm to prevent his return. The offerings of food and other articles deposited on the grave are accounted for by some as depriving the dead of any excuse for coming to the house, and fetching these things himself. Among the Tchuvashes a son uses the following invocation when offering sacrifice to the spirit of his father: 'We honour thee with a feast; look, here is bread for thee, and different kinds of meat; thou hast all thou canst want: but do not trouble us, do not come near us' (p. 122).

It is certainly a general belief that if they receive no such offerings, the dead revenge themselves by sending diseases and other misfortunes. The ancient Hiongnu or Huns killed the prisoners of war on the tombs of their leaders; for the Shamans assured them that the anger of the spirits could not be appeased otherwise. The same Huns had regular

sacrifices in honour of their ancestral spirits. One tribe, the Topas, which had migrated from Siberia to Central Asia, sent ambassadors with offerings to the tombs of their ancestors. Their tombs were protected with high palings, to prevent the living from clambering in, and the dead from clambering out. Some of these tombs were magnificently adorned[1], and at last grew almost, and in China[2] altogether, into temples where the spirits of the departed were actually worshipped. All this takes place by slow degrees; it begins with placing a flower on the tomb; it ends with worshipping the spirits of departed emperors[3] as equals of the Supreme Spirit, the *Shang-te* or *Tien*, and as enjoying a divine rank far above other spirits or *Shin*.

The difference, at first sight, between the minute ceremonial of China and the homely worship of Finns and Lapps may seem enormous; but if we trace both back as far as

[1] Castrén, l. c. p. 122.

[2] When an emperor died, and men erected an ancestral temple, and set up a parental tablet (as a resting-place for the 'shin' or spirit of the departed), they called him Te.—Medhurst, Inquiry, p. 7; from the *Le-ke*, vol. i. p. 49.

[3] Medhurst, Inquiry, p. 45.

we can, we see that the early stages of their religious belief are curiously alike. First, a worship of heaven, as the emblem of the most exalted conception which the untutored mind of man can entertain, expanding with the expanding thoughts of its worshippers, and eventually leading and lifting the soul from horizon to horizon, to a belief in that which is beyond all horizons, a belief in that which is infinite. Secondly, a belief in deathless spirits or powers of nature; which supplies the more immediate and every-day wants of the religious instinct of man, satisfies the imagination, and furnishes the earliest poetry with elevated themes. Lastly, a belief in the existence of ancestral spirits: which implies, consciously or unconsciously, in a spiritual or in a material form, that which is one of the life-springs of all religion, a belief in immortality.

Allow me in conclusion to recapitulate shortly the results of this Lecture.

We found, first of all, that there is a natural connexion between language and religion, and that therefore the classification of languages is applicable also to the ancient religions of the world.

We found, secondly, that there was a common Aryan religion before the separation of the Aryan race; a common Semitic religion before the separation of the Semitic race; and a common Turanic religion before the separation of the Chinese and the other tribes belonging to the Turanian class. We found, in fact, three ancient centres of religion as we had before three ancient centres of language, and we have thus gained, I believe, a truly historical basis for a scientific treatment of the principal religions of the world.

FOURTH LECTURE.

DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION,

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WHEN I came to deliver the first of this short course of lectures, I confess I felt sorry for having undertaken so difficult a task; and if I could have withdrawn from it with honour, I should gladly have done so. Now that I have only this one lecture left, I feel equally sorry, and I wish I could continue my course in order to say something more of what I wished to say, and what in four lectures I could say but very imperfectly. From the announcement of my lectures you must have seen that in what I called 'An Introduction to the Science of Religion' I did not intend to treat of more than some preliminary questions. I chiefly wanted to show in what sense a truly scientific study of religion

was possible, what materials there are to enable us to gain a trustworthy knowledge of the principal religions of the world, and according to what principles these religions may be classified. It would perhaps have been more interesting to some of my hearers if we had rushed at once into the ancient temples to look at the broken idols of the past, and to discover, if possible, some of the fundamental ideas that found expression in the ancient systems of faith and worship. But in order to explore with real advantage any ruins, whether of stone or of thought, it is necessary that we should know where to look and how to look. In most works on the history of ancient religions we are driven about like forlorn tourists in a vast museum where ancient and modern statues, gems of Oriental and European workmanship, original works of art and mere copies are piled up together, and at the end of our journey we only feel bewildered and disheartened. We have seen much, no doubt, but we carry away very little. It is better, before we enter into these labyrinths, that we should spend a few hours in making up our minds as to what we really want to see and

what we may pass by; and if in these introductory lectures we have only arrived at a clear view on these points, you will find hereafter that our time has not been altogether spent in vain.

You will have observed that I have carefully abstained from entering on the domain of what I call *Theoretic*, as distinguished from *Comparative Theology*. Theoretic theology, or, as it is sometimes called, the philosophy of religion, has, as far as I can judge, its right place at the end, not at the beginning of Comparative Theology. I have made no secret of my own conviction that a study of Comparative Theology will produce with regard to Theoretic Theology the same revolution which a study of Comparative Philology has produced in what used to be called the Philosophy of language. You know how all speculations on the nature of language, on its origin, its development, its natural growth and inevitable decay have had to be taken up afresh from the very beginning, after the new light thrown on the history of language by the comparative method. I look forward to the same results with respect to philosophical inquiries into the nature of religion,

its origin, and its development. I do not mean to say that all former speculations on these subjects will become useless. Plato's *Cratylus*, even the *Hermes* of Harris, and Horne Tooke's *Diversions of Purley* have not become useless after the work done by Grimm and Bopp, by Humboldt and Bunsen. But I believe that philosophers who speculate on the origin of religion and on the psychological conditions of faith, will in future write more circumspectly, and with less of that dogmatic assurance which has hitherto distinguished so many speculations on the philosophy of religion, not excepting those of Schelling and Hegel. Before the rise of geology it was easy to speculate on the origin of the earth; before the rise of glossology, any theories on the revealed, the mimetic, the interjectional, or the conventional origin of language might easily be held and defended. Not so now, when facts have filled the place that was formerly open to theories, and when those who have worked most carefully among the *débris* of the earth or the strata of languages are most reluctant to approach the great problem of the first beginnings.

So much in order to explain why in this introductory course I have confined myself within narrower limits than some of my hearers seem to have expected. And now, as I have but one hour left, I shall try to make the best use of it I can, by devoting it entirely to a point on which I have not yet touched, viz. on the right spirit in which ancient religions ought to be studied and interpreted.

No judge, if he had before him the worst of criminals, would treat him as most historians and theologians have treated the religions of the world. Every act in the lives of their founders which shows that they were but men, is eagerly seized and judged without mercy; every doctrine that is not carefully guarded is interpreted in the worst sense that it will bear; every act of worship that differs from our own way of serving God is held up to ridicule and contempt. And this is not done by accident, but with a set purpose, nay, with something of that artificial sense of duty which stimulates the counsel for the defence to see nothing but an angel in his own client, and anything but an angel in the plaintiff on the other side. The result has been—as it could

not be otherwise—a complete miscarriage of justice, an utter misapprehension of the real character and purpose of the ancient religions of mankind; and, as a necessary consequence, a failure in discovering the peculiar features which really distinguish Christianity from all the religions of the world, and secure to its founder his own peculiar place in the history of the world, far away from Vasish*th*a, Zoroaster, and Buddha, from Moses and Mohammed, from Confucius and Lao-tse. By unduly depreciating all other religions, we have placed our own in a position which its founder never intended for it; we have torn it away from the sacred context of the history of the world; we have ignored, or wilfully narrowed, the sundry times and divers manners in which, in times past, God spake unto the fathers by the prophets; and instead of recognising Christianity as coming in the fulness of time, and as the fulfilment of the hopes and desires of the whole world, we have brought ourselves to look upon its advent as the only broken link in that unbroken chain which is rightly called the Divine government of the world.

Nay, worse than this: there are people who,

from mere ignorance of the ancient religions of mankind, have adopted a doctrine more unchristian than any that could be found in the pages of the religious books of antiquity, viz. that all the nations of the earth, before the rise of Christianity, were mere outcasts, forsaken and forgotten of their Father in heaven, without a knowledge of God, without a hope of salvation. If a comparative study of the religions of the world produced but this one result, that it drove this godless heresy out of every Christian heart, and made us see again in the whole history of the world the eternal wisdom and love of God towards all His creatures, it would have done a good work.

And it is high time that this good work should be done. We have learnt to do justice to the ancient poetry, the political institutions, the legal enactments, the systems of philosophy, and the works of art of nations differing from ourselves in many respects; we have brought ourselves to value even the crude and imperfect beginnings in all these spheres of mental activity; and I believe we have thus learnt lessons from ancient history which we

could not have learnt anywhere else. We can admire the temples of the ancient world, whether in Egypt, Babylon, or Greece; we can stand in raptures before the statues of Phidias; and only when we approach the religious conceptions which find their expression in the temples of Minerva and in the statues of Jupiter, we turn away with pity or scorn, we call their gods mere idols and images, and class their worshippers—Perikles, Phidias, Sokrates, and Plato—with the worshippers of stocks and stones. I do not deny that the religions of the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans were imperfect and full of errors, particularly in their later stages, but I maintain that the fact of these ancient people having any religion at all, however imperfect, raises them higher, and brings them nearer to us, than all their works of art, all their poetry, all their philosophy. Neither their art nor their poetry nor their philosophy would have been possible without religion; and if we will but look without prejudice, if we will but judge as we ought always to judge, with unwearying love and charity, we shall be surprised at that new world of beauty and truth which, like the

azure of a vernal sky, rises before us from behind the clouds of the ancient mythologies.

We can speak freely and fearlessly; *we* can afford to be charitable. There was a time when it was otherwise. There was a time when people imagined that truth, particularly the highest truth, the truth of religion, could only conquer by blind zeal, by fire and sword. At that time all idols were to be overthrown, their altars to be destroyed, and their worshippers to be cut to pieces. But there came a time when the sword was to be put up into its place. . . . And if even after that time there was a work to work and a fight to fight, which required the fiery zeal of apostles and martyrs, that time also is now past; the conquest is gained, and we have time to reflect calmly on what is past and what is still to come.

We are no longer afraid of Baal or Jupiter. Our dangers and our difficulties are now of a very different kind. If we believe that there is a God, and that He created heaven and earth, and that He ruleth the world by His unceasing providence, we cannot believe that millions of human beings, all created like ourselves in the image of God, were, in their

time of ignorance, so utterly abandoned that their whole religion was falsehood, their whole worship a farce, their whole life a mockery. An honest and independent study of the religions of the world will teach us that it was not so—will teach us the same lesson which it taught St. Augustine, that there is no religion which does not contain some grains of truth. Nay, it will teach us more; it will enable us to see in the history of the ancient religions, more clearly than anywhere else, the *Divine education of the human race.*

I know this is a view which has been much objected to, but I hold it as strongly as ever. If we must not read in the history of the whole human race the daily lessons of a Divine teacher and guide, if there is no purpose, no increasing purpose in the succession of the religions of the world, then we might as well shut up the godless book of history altogether, and look upon men as no better than the grass which is to-day in the field and to-morrow is cast into the oven. Man would then be indeed of less value than the sparrows, for none of them is forgotten before God.

But those who imagine that, in order to

make sure of their own salvation, they must have a great gulf fixed between themselves and all the other nations of the world—between their own religion and the religions of Zoroaster, Buddha, or Confucius—can hardly be aware how strongly the interpretation of the history of the religions of the world, as an education of the human race, can be supported by authorities before which they themselves would probably bow in silence. We need not appeal to an English bishop to prove the soundness, or to a German philosopher to prove the truth, of this view. If we wanted authorities we could appeal to Popes, to the Fathers of the Church, to the Apostles themselves, for they have all upheld the same view with no wavering or uncertain voice.

I pointed out before that the simultaneous study of the Old and the New Testament, with an occasional reference to the religion and philosophy of Greece and Rome, had supplied Christian divines with some of the most useful lessons for a wider comparison of all the religions of the world. In studying the Old Testament, and observing in it the absence of some of the most essential truths of Chris-

tianity, they, too, had asked with surprise why the interval between the fall of man and his redemption had been so long, why men were allowed so long to walk in darkness, and whether the heathens had really no place in the counsels of God. Here is the answer of a Pope, of Leo the Great[1] (440–461):

'Let those who with impious murmurings find fault with the Divine dispensations, and who complain about the lateness of Our Lord's nativity, cease from their grievances, as if what was carried out in this last age of the world, had not been impending in time past. . . . What the apostles preached, the prophets had announced before, and what has always been believed, cannot be said to have been fulfilled too late. By this delay of His work of salvation the wisdom and love of God have only made us more fitted for His call; so that, what had been announced before by many signs and words and mysteries during so many centuries, should not be doubtful or uncertain in the days of the Gospel. . . . God has not provided for the interests of men by a new counsel or by

[1] Hardwick, Christ and other Masters, vol. i. p. 85.

a late compassion; but He had instituted from the beginning for all men one and the same path of salvation.'

This is the language of a Pope—of Leo the Great.

Now let us hear what Irenæus says, and how he explains to himself the necessary imperfection of the early religions of mankind. 'A mother,' he says, 'may indeed offer to her infant a complete repast, but her infant cannot yet receive the food which is meant for full-grown men. In the same manner God might indeed from the beginning have offered to man the truth in its completeness, but man was unable to receive it, for he was still a child.'

If this, too, is considered a presumptuous reading of the counsels of God, we have, as a last appeal, the words of St. Paul, that 'the law was the schoolmaster to the Jews,' joined with the words of St. Peter, 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.'

But, as I said before, we need not appeal to any authorities, if we will but read the

records of the ancient religions of the world with an open heart and in a charitable spirit —in a spirit that thinketh no evil, but rejoices in the truth wherever it can be found.

I suppose that most of us, sooner or later in life, have felt how the whole world—this wicked world, as we call it—is changed as if by magic, if once we can make up our mind to give men credit for good motives, never to be suspicious, never to think evil, never to think ourselves better than our neighbours. Trust a man to be true and good, and, even if he is not, your trust will tend to make him true and good. It is the same with the religions of the world. Let us but once make up our mind to look in them for what is true and good, and we shall hardly know our old religions again. If they are the work of the devil, as many of us have been brought up to believe, then never was there a kingdom so divided against itself from the very beginning. There is no religion—or if there is, I do not know it—which does not say, 'Do good, avoid evil.' There is none which does not contain what Rabbi Hillel called the quintessence of all religions, the simple warning,

'Be good, my boy.' 'Be good, my boy,' may seem a very short catechism; but let us add to it, 'Be good, my boy, for God's sake,' and we have in it very nearly the whole of the Law and the Prophets.

I wish I could read you the extracts I have collected from the sacred books of the ancient world, grains of truth more precious to me than grains of gold; prayers so simple and so true that we could all join in them if we once accustomed ourselves to the strange sounds of Sanskrit or Chinese. I can to-day give you a few specimens only.

Here is a prayer of Vasish*th*a, a Vedic prophet, addressed to Varu*n*a, the Greek Οὐρανός, an ancient name of the sky and of the god who resides in the sky.

I shall read you one verse at least in the original—it is the 86th hymn of the seventh book of the Rig-veda—so that you may hear the very sounds which more than three thousand years ago were uttered for the first time in a village on the borders of the Sutledge, then called the *S*atadru, by a man who felt as we feel, who spoke as we speak, who believed in many points as we believe—a dark-

complexioned Hindu, shepherd, poet, priest, patriarch, and certainly a man who, in the noble army of prophets, deserves a place by the side of David. And does it not show the indestructibility of the spirit, if we see how the waves which, by a poetic impulse, he started on the vast ocean of thought have been heaving and spreading and widening, till after centuries and centuries they strike to-day against our shores and tell us, in accents that cannot be mistaken, what passed through the mind of that ancient Aryan poet when he felt the presence of an almighty God, the maker of heaven and earth, and felt at the same time the burden of his sin, and prayed to his God that He might take that burden from him, that He might forgive him his sin? When you listen to the strange sounds of this Vedic hymn, you are listening, even in this Royal Institution, to spirit-rapping—to real spirit-rapping. Vasish*th*a is really among us again, and if you will accept me as his interpreter, you will find that we can all understand what the old poet wished to say[1]:

[1] M. M., History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 540.

'Dhîrâ tv asya mahinâ *g*anûṁshi,
vi yas tastambha rodasî *k*id urvî,
pra nâkam *r*ishva*m* nunude b*r*ihanta*m*,
dvitâ nakshatram paprtha*k k*a bhûma.

'Wise and mighty are the works of him who stemmed asunder the wide firmaments (heaven and earth). He lifted on high the bright and glorious heaven; he stretched out apart the starry sky and the earth.

'Do I say this to my own self? How can I get near unto Varu*n*a? Will he accept my offering without displeasure? When shall I, with a quiet mind, see him propitiated?

'I ask, O Varu*n*a, wishing to know this my sin; I go to ask the wise. The sages all tell me the same: "Varu*n*a it is who is angry with thee."

'Was it for an old sin, O Varu*n*a, that thou wishest to destroy thy friend, who always praises thee? Tell me, thou unconquerable Lord! and I will quickly turn to thee with praise, freed from sin.

'Absolve us from the sins of our fathers, and from those which we committed with our own bodies. Release Vasish*th*a, O King, like a

thief who has feasted on stolen cattle; release him like a calf from the rope.

'It was not our own doing, O Varuṇa, it was a slip; an intoxicating draught, passion, dice, thoughtlessness. The old is there to mislead the young; even sleep is not free from mischief.

'Let me without sin give satisfaction to the angry god, like a slave to his bounteous lord. The lord god enlighteneth the foolish; he, the wisest, leads his worshipper to wealth.

'O lord Varuṇa, may this song go well to thy heart! May we prosper in keeping and acquiring! Protect us, O gods, always with your blessings.'

I am not blind to the blemishes of this ancient prayer, but I am not blind to its beauty either, and I think you will admit that the discovery of even one such poem among the hymns of the Rig-veda, and the certainty that such a poem was composed in India at least three thousand years ago, without any inspiration but that which all can find who seek for it if haply they may find it, is well worth the labour of a life. It shows that man was never forsaken of God, and that conviction

is worth more to the student of history than all the dynasties of Babylon and Egypt, worth more than all lacustrian villages, worth more than the skulls and jaw-bones of Neanderthal or Abbeville.

My next extract will be from the Zendavesta, the sacred book of the Zoroastrians, older in its language than the cuneiform inscriptions of Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, those ancient kings of Persia who knew that they were kings by the grace of *Auramazda*, the Zend *Ahurō mazdāo*[1], and who placed his sacred image high on the mountain-records of Behistun. That ancient book, or its fragments at least, have survived many dynasties and kingdoms, and are still believed in by a small remnant of the Persian race, now settled at Bombay, and known all over the world by the name of Parsis.

The first extract is taken from the Yaçna, forming its thirtieth chapter. It has been translated or, I should rather say, a decipherment of it has been attempted by several scholars, more particularly by Professor Spiegel

[1] Lectures on the Science of Language, vol. i. p. 239.

and Professor Haug[1]. It has also been referred to by Bunsen in his 'God in History' (vol. i. p. 277, of Miss Winkworth's translation), and I may quote from him what will serve as a living, though imaginary, background for this striking hymn.

'Let us picture to ourselves,' he writes, 'one of the holy hills dedicated to the worship of fire, in the neighbourhood of the primeval city of marvels in Central Asia,—Bactra "the glorious," now called Balkh, "the mother of cities." From this height we look down in imagination over the elevated plateau, which lies nearly 2,000 feet above the level of the sea, sloping downwards toward the North and ending in a sandy desert, which does not even allow the stream Bactrus to reach the neighbouring Oxus. On the southern horizon, the last spurs of the Hindukush, or, as the historian of Alexander terms it, the Indian Caucasus, rear their lofty peaks 5,000 feet high. Out of those hills,—the Paropamisus or Hindukush,—springs the chief river of the country, the

[1] Essays on the Sacred Language of the Parsees, 1862, p. 141.

Bactrus or Dehas, which near the city divides into hundreds of canals, making the face of the country one blooming garden of richest fruits. To this point converge the caravans, which travel across the mountains to the land of marvels, or bring treasures from thence. . . . . Thither, on occasion of the peaceful sacrifice by fire, from whose ascending flame auguries were to be drawn, Zarathustra had convened the nobles of the land, that he might perform a great public religious act. Arrived there, at the head of his disciples, the seers and preachers, he summons the princes to draw nigh, and to choose between faith and superstition.'

I give the translation of the hymn, partly after Spiegel, partly after Haug, and I have likewise availed myself of some important emendations proposed by Dr. Hübschmann [1]. Yet, I must confess that, in numerous passages, my translation is purely tentative, and all I can answer for is the general tenour of the hymn.

[1] Ein Zoroastrisches Lied, mit Rücksicht auf die Tradition übersetzt und erklärt von Dr. H. Hübschmann: München, 1872.

1 Now I shall proclaim to all who have come to listen, the praises of thee, the all-wise Lord, and the hymns of Vohumano (the good spirit). Wise Asha! I ask that (thy) grace may appear in the lights of heaven.

2 Hear with your ears what is best, perceive with your mind what is pure, so that every man may for himself choose his tenets before the great doom! May the wise be on our side!

3 Those old Spirits who are twins, made known what is good and what is evil in thoughts, words, and deeds. Those who are good; distinguished between the two, not those who are evil-doers.

4 When these two Spirits came together, they made first life and death, so that there should be at last the most wretched life for the bad, but for the good blessedness.

5 Of these two Spirits the evil one chose the worst deeds; the kind Spirit, he whose garment is the immovable sky, chose what is right; and they also who faithfully please Ahuramazda by good works.

6 Those who worshipped the Devas and were deceived, did not rightly distinguish be-

tween the two; those who had chosen the worst Spirit came to hold counsel together, and ran to Aeshma in order to afflict the life of man.

7 And to him (the good) came might, and with wisdom virtue; and the everlasting Armaiti herself made his body vigorous; it fell to thee to be rich by her gifts.

8 But when the punishment of their crimes will come, and, oh Mazda, thy power will be known as the reward of piety for those who delivered (Druj) falsehood into the hand of Asha (truth),

9 Let us then be of those who further this world; oh Ahuramazda, oh bliss-conferring Asha! Let our mind be there where wisdom abides.

10 Then indeed there will be the fall of the pernicious Druj, but in the beautiful abode of Vohumano, of Mazda, and Asha, will be gathered for ever those who dwell in good report.

11 Oh men, if you cling to these commandments which Mazda has given, . . . which are a torment to the wicked, and a blessing to the righteous, then there will be victory through them.'

The next three verses are taken from the forty-third chapter of the Yaçna[1].

'I ask thee, tell me the truth, O Ahura! Who was from the beginning the father of the pure world? Who has made a path for the sun and for the stars? Who (but thou) makes the moon to increase and to decrease? That, O Mazda, and other things, I wish to know.

'I ask thee, tell me the truth, O Ahura! Who holds the earth and the clouds that they do not fall? Who holds the sea and the trees? Who has given swiftness to the wind and the clouds? Who is the creator of the good spirit?

'I ask thee, tell me the truth, O Ahura! Who has made the kindly light and the darkness, who has made the kindly sleep and the awaking? Who has made the mornings, the noons, and the nights, they who remind the wise of his duty?'

Whatever the difficulties may be, and they are no doubt most formidable, that prevent us from deciphering aright the words of the Zend-avesta, so much is clear, that in the Bible of

[1] Yasna, xliv. 3, ed. Brockhaus, p. 130; Spiegel, Yasna, p. 146; Haug, Essays, p. 150.

Zoroaster every man is called upon to take his part in the great battle between Good and Evil which is always going on, and is assured that in the end good will prevail.

What shall I quote from Buddha? for we have so much left of his sayings and his parables that it is indeed difficult to choose. In a collection of his sayings, written in Pâli—of which I have lately published a translation [1]—we read:

'1 All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him as the wheel follows the foot of him who draws the cart.

'49 As the bee collects honey and departs without injuring the flower, so let the sage dwell on earth.

'62 "These sons belong to me, and this wealth belongs to me," with such thoughts a fool is tormented. He himself does not belong to himself: how much less sons and wealth!

[1] Buddhaghosha's Parables, translated from Burmese by Captain Rogers; with an Introduction containing Buddha's 'Dhammapada' or 'Path of Virtue,' translated from Pâli by Max Müller. London: Trübner and Co., 1870.

'121 Let no man think lightly of evil, saying in his heart, It will not come nigh unto me. Let no man think lightly of good, saying in his heart, It will not benefit me. Even by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled.

'173 He whose evil deeds are covered by good deeds, brightens up this world like the moon when she rises from behind the clouds.

'223 Let a man overcome anger by love, evil by good, the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth.

'264 Not by tonsure does an undisciplined man become a saint: can a man be a saint who is still held captive by desires and greediness?

'394 What is the use of platted hair, O fool? what of the raiment of goat-skins? Within thee there is ravening, but the outside thou makest clean.'

In no religion are we so constantly reminded of our own as in Buddhism, and yet in no religion has man been drawn away so far from the truth as in the religion of Buddha. Buddhism and Christianity are indeed the two opposite poles with regard to the most essential points of religion: Buddhism ignoring all feeling of

dependence on a higher power, and therefore denying the very existence of a supreme Deity; Christianity resting entirely on a belief in God as the Father, in the Son of Man as the Son of God, and making us all children of God by faith in His Son. Yet between the language of Buddha and his disciples and the language of Christ and His apostles there are strange coincidences. Even some of the Buddhist legends and parables sound as if taken from the New Testament, though we know that many of them existed before the beginning of the Christian era.

Thus one day Ananda, the disciple of Buddha, after a long walk in the country, meets with Mâtangî, a woman of the low caste of the *Kând*âlas, near a well, and asks her for some water. She tells him what she is, and that she must not come near him. But he replies, 'My sister, I ask not for thy caste or thy family, I ask only for a draught of water.' She afterwards becomes herself a disciple of Buddha [1].

Sometimes the same doctrine which in the

[1] Burnouf, Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme, p. 205.

New Testament occurs in the simple form of a commandment, is inculcated by the Buddhists in the form of a parable.

A Buddhist priest, we read[1], was preaching to the multitudes that had gathered round him. In the crowd there was a king whose heart was full of sorrow, because he had no son to perpetuate his race. While he was listening, the preacher said:—

'To give away our riches is considered the most difficult virtue in the world; he who gives away his riches is like a man who gives away his life: for our very life seems to cling to our riches. But Buddha, when his mind was moved by pity, gave his life, like grass, for the sake of others; why should we think of miserable riches! By this exalted virtue, Buddha, when he was freed from all desires, and had obtained divine knowledge, attained unto Buddhahood. Therefore let a wise man, after he has turned away his desires from all pleasures, do good to all beings, even unto sacrificing his own life, that thus he may attain to true knowledge.

'Listen to me: There was formerly a prince,

[1] Somadeva, vi. 28, 1 *seq.*

free from all worldly desires. Though he was young and handsome, yet he left his palace, and embraced the life of a travelling ascetic. This ascetic coming one day to the house of a merchant, was seen by his young wife, and she, touched by the loveliness of his eyes, exclaimed: "How was this hard mode of life embraced by such a one as thou art? Blessed, indeed, is that woman on whom thou lookest with thy lovely eyes!"

'When he heard this, the ascetic plucked out one eye, placed it into his hand, and said: "Mother, look at this! Take this hideous ball of flesh, if you like it. The other eye is like unto this; tell me, what is there lovely in them?"'

The preacher continued in the same strain, quoting other parables to the same purpose, and finished by inculcating the lesson that the true sage should neither care for riches, nor for his life, and that he should not cling to his wife and children, for they are like the grass that is cast away.

It is impossible to read such parables without being reminded of verses of the Bible, such as (Matt. v. 29): 'And if thy right eye offend thee,

pluck it out, and cast it from thee;' and again (Matt. xix. 21): 'Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children;' and again (Luke xii. 28): 'The grass which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.'

In the same collection, the Ocean of the rivers of stories, by Somadeva (vi. 27), we read of a merchant who had embraced the religion of Sugata, and shewed great respect to the Buddhist monks. His young son, however, despised his father, and called him a sinner.

'Why do you abuse me?' said the father.

The son replied: 'You have abandoned the law of the Vedas, and followed a new law which is no law. You have forsaken the Brâhmans, and worship the *Śramaṇa*s. What is the use of the Saugata religion, which is followed only by men of low birth, who want to find a refuge in the monasteries, who are happy when they have thrown away their loin cloth, and shaved off every hair on their head; who eat whatever they please, and perform neither ablutions nor penances?'

The father replied: 'There are different

forms of religion: one looks to another world, the other is intended for the masses. But surely true Brahmanism also consists in avoiding of passion, in truthfulness, kindness towards all beings, and in not recklessly breaking the rules of caste. Therefore you should not always abuse my religion which grants protection to all beings. For surely there is no doubt that to be kind cannot be unlawful, and I know no other kindness but to give protection to all living beings. Therefore if I am too much attached to my religion whose chief object is love, and whose end is deliverance, what sin is there in me, O child?'

However, as the son did not desist from his abuse, his father took him before the king, and the king ordered him to be executed. He granted him two months to prepare for death. At the end of the two months the son was brought before the king again, and when the king saw that he had grown thin and pale, he asked for the reason. The culprit replied that seeing death approach nearer and nearer every day, he could not think of eating. Then the king told him, that he threatened to have him executed in order

that he might know the anguish that every creature feels at the approach of death, and that he might learn to respect a religion which enforces compassion for all beings. Having known the fear of death, he ought now to strive after spiritual freedom, and never again abuse his father's religion[1].

The son was moved, and asked the king how he could obtain spiritual freedom. The king hearing that there was a fair in the town, ordered the young man to take a vessel brimful of oil, and to carry it through the streets of the town without spilling a drop. Two executioners with drawn swords were to walk behind him, and at the first drop being spilled, they were to cut off his head. When the young man, after having walked through all the streets of the city, returned to the king without having spilled one drop, the king said: 'Did you to-day, while walking through the streets, see anybody?'

The young man replied: 'My thoughts were fixed on the vessel, and I saw and heard nothing else.'

[1] Cf. Mahâvaṁsa, p. 33.

Then the king said: 'Let thy thought be fixed in the same way on the Highest! He who is collected, and has ceased to care for outward life, will see the truth, and having seen the truth, will not be caught again by the net of works; thus I have taught you in few words the way that leads to spiritual freedom.'

According to Buddha, the motive of all our actions should be *pity* or *love* for our neighbour.

And as in Buddhism, so even in the writings of Confucius we find again what we value most in our own religion. I shall quote but one saying of the Chinese sage[1]:

'What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do that to others.'

One passage only from the founder of the second religion in China, from Lao-tse (cap. 25):

'There is an infinite Being, which existed before heaven and earth.

'How calm it is! how free!

'It lives alone, it changes not.

[1] Dr. Legge's Life and Teachings of Confucius, p. 47.

'It moves everywhere, but it never suffers.

'We may look on it as the Mother of the Universe.

'I, I know not its name.

'In order to give it a title, I call it *Tao* (the Way).

'When I try to give it a name, I call it *Great.*

'After calling it *Great*, I call it *Fugitive.*

'After calling it *Fugitive*, I call it *Distant.*

'After calling it *Distant*, I say it comes back to me.'

Need I say that Greek and Roman writers are full of the most exalted sentiments on religion and morality, in spite of their mythology and in spite of their idolatry? When Plato says that men ought to strive after likeness with God, do you think that he thought of Jupiter, or Mars, or Mercury? When another poet exclaimed that the conscience is a god for all men, was he so very far from a knowledge of the true God?

But even among black races of Africa where we least expect it, we meet with the most touching yearnings after the Divine, expressed in language, half childish, and half childlike.

One of the Zulus, whose confidence Dr. Callaway had gained, said to him[1]:

'We did not hear first from the white men about the King who is above. In summer-time, when it thunders, we say, "The King is playing." And if there is one who is afraid, the elder people say to him, "It is nothing but fear. What thing belonging to the King have you eaten?"'

Another very old man stated (p. 50): 'When we were children, it was said: "The King is in heaven." We used constantly to hear this when we were children; they used to point to the King on high; we did not hear his name; we heard only that the King is on high. We heard it said that the creator of the world (Umdabuko) is the King which is above (p. 60).'

A very old woman when examined by one of her own countrymen, said (p. 53): 'When we speak of the origin of corn, asking, "Whence came this?" the old people said, "It came from the creator who created all things; but we do not know him." When we asked continually, "Where is the creator? for our chiefs we see,"

[1] Dr. Callaway, Unkulunkulu, p. 19.

the old men denied, saying, "And those chiefs, too, whom we see, they were created by the creator." And when we asked, "Where is he? for he is not visible at all; where is he then?" we heard our fathers pointing towards heaven, and saying, "The Creator of all things is in heaven. And there is a nation of people there, too . . . ." It used to be said constantly, "He is the King of kings." Also when we heard it said that the heaven had eaten the cattle at such a village (i.e. when the lightning had struck them), we said, "The King has taken the cattle from such a village." And when it thundered the people took courage by saying, "The King is playing."'

Again, another very old man, belonging to the Amantanja tribe, who showed four wounds, and whose people had been scattered by the armies of Utshaka, said (p. 56): 'The old faith of our forefathers was this; they said, "There is Unkulunkulu, who is a man, who is of the earth." And they used to say, "There is a king in heaven." When it hailed, and thundered, they said, "The king is arming; he will cause it to hail; put things in order." . . As to the source of being I know that only

which is in heaven (p. 59). The ancient men said, "The source of being (Umdabuko) is above, which gives life to men" . . . . It was said at first, the rain came from the King, and that the sun came from him, and the moon which gives a white light during the night, that men may go and not be injured.

'If lightning struck cattle, the people were not distressed. It used to be said (p. 60): "The King has slaughtered for himself among his own food. Is it yours? Is it not the King's? He is hungry; he kills for himself." If a village is struck by lightning, and a cow is killed, it is said, "This village will be prosperous." If a man is struck and dies, it is said, "The King has found fault with him."'

Another name of the Creator is Itongo, the Spirit, and this is the account given by a native (p. 94): 'When he says Itongo, he is not speaking of a man who has died and risen again; he is speaking of the Up-bearer of the earth, which supports men and cattle. The Up-bearer is the earth by which we live; and there is the Up-bearer of the earth by which we live, and without which we could not be, and by which we are.'

Thus we find among a people who were said to be without any religious life, without any idea of a Divine power, that some of the most essential elements of religion are fully developed,—a belief in an invisible God, the Creator of all things, residing in heaven, sending rain and hail and thunder, punishing the wicked, and claiming his sacrifice from among the cattle on a thousand hills. This shows how careful we should be before we accept purely negative evidence on the religion or the absence of all religion among savage tribes. Suppose an educated native of India or China were to appear suddenly in the Black country, and address some questions in scarcely intelligible English[1] to a dust-begrimed coal-heaver, and ask him what his ancestors had told him about the source of being—what account would he give to his countrymen of the state of religious faith in England, if all his information had been gathered from the answers which he

[1] P. 67. 'On the arrival of the English in this land of ours, the first who came was a missionary named Uyegana. On his arrival he taught the people, but they did not understand what he said . . . . and although he did not understand the people's language, he jabbered constantly to the people, and they could not understand what he said.'

would be likely to receive from such witnesses! Perhaps he would never hear the name of God except in a 'God bless you!' which people uttered in England as well as in Germany and many other countries, when any one present sneezed. It was in such an exclamation that Dr. Callaway first discovered one of the names of the deity among the Zulus. Asking an old man who lived at the mission station, whether the word Utikxo had come into use after the arrival of the missionaries, he received the answer (p. 64): 'No; the word Utikxo is not a word we learnt from the English; it is an old word of our own. It used to be always said when a man sneezes, "May Utikxo ever regard me with favour."' This Utikxo was supposed to have been concealed by Unkulunkulu (p. 67), and to be seen by no one. Men saw Unkulunkulu, and said that he was the creator of all things (Umveliqangi); they said this, because they did not see Him who made Unkulunkulu; they therefore said that Unkulunkulu was God.

After these crude fragments picked up among the uncultured races of Africa, who have *not yet* arrived at any positive form of

faith, let us now, in conclusion, look at a few specimens of religious thought, emanating from those who *no longer* hold to any positive form of faith. I take as their representative Faizi, the brother of Abulfazl, one of that small company at the Court of the Emperor Akbar, who, after a comparative study of the religions of the world, had renounced the religion of Mohammad, and for whom, as we saw[1], the orthodox Badáoní could not invent invective strong enough to express his horror. Faizi was one of those men whom their contemporaries call heretics and blasphemers, but whom posterity often calls Saints and Martyrs, the salt of the earth, the light of the world; a man of real devotion, real love for his fellow-creatures, real faith in God, the Unknown God, whom we ignorantly worship, whom no human thought and no human language can declare, and whose altar,—the same that St. Paul saw at Athens—will remain standing for ever in the hearts of all true believers.

'Take Faizi's Díwán to bear witness to the wonderful speeches of a free-thinker who belongs to a thousand sects.

[1] See p. 80.

'I have become dust, but from the odour of my grave, people shall know that man rises from such dust.

'They may know Faizi's[1] end from the beginning: without an equal he goes from the world, and without an equal he rises.

'In the assembly of the day of resurrection, when past things shall be forgiven, the sins of the Ka'bah will be forgiven for the sake of the dust of Christian churches[2].

'O Thou who existest from eternity and abidest for ever, sight cannot bear Thy light, praise cannot express Thy perfection.

'Thy light melts the understanding, and Thy glory baffles wisdom; to think of Thee destroys reason, Thy essence confounds thought.

'Thy holiness pronounces that the blood-drops of human meditation are shed in vain

[1] Faizi means also the heart.

[2] The sins of Islam are as worthless as the dust of Christianity. On the day of resurrection, both Muhammadans and Christians will see the vanity of their religious doctrines. Men fight about religion on earth; in heaven they shall find out that there is only one true religion, the worship of God's spirit.

in search of Thy knowledge : human understanding is but an atom of dust.

'Thy jealousy, the guard of Thy door, stuns human thought by a blow in the face, and gives human ignorance a slap on the nape of the neck.

'Science is like blinding sand of the desert on the road to Thy perfection. The town of literature is a mere hamlet compared with the world of Thy knowledge.

'My foot has no power to travel on this path which misleads sages ; I have no power to bear the odour of the wine, it confounds my mind.

'Man's so-called foresight and guiding reason wander about bewildered in the city of Thy glory.

'Human knowledge and thought combined can only spell the first letter of the alphabet of Thy love.

'Mere beginners and such as are far advanced in knowledge are both eager for union with Thee ; but the beginners are tattlers, and those that are advanced are triflers.

'Each brain is full of thought of grasping

Thee ; the brow of Plato even burned with the fever-heat of this hopeless thought.

'How shall a thoughtless man like me succeed, when Thy jealousy strikes a dagger into the liver of saints ?

'O that Thy grace would cleanse my brain ; for if not, my restlessness will end in madness.

'To bow down the head upon the dust of Thy threshold and then to look up, is neither right in faith, nor permitted by truth.'

'O man, thou coin bearing the double stamp of body and spirit, I do not know what thy nature is ; for thou art higher than heaven and lower than earth.

'Thy frame contains the image of the heavenly and the lower regions ; be either heavenly or earthly, thou art at liberty to choose.

'Do not act against thy reason, for it is a trustworthy counsellor ; put not thy heart on illusions, for the heart is a lying fool.

'If thou wishest to understand the secret meaning of the words, "to prefer the welfare of others to thy own," treat thyself with poison, and others with sugar.

'Accept misfortune with a joyful look, if thou art in the service of Him whom people serve.

'Plunged into the wisdom of Greece, my mind rose again from the deep in the land of Ind; be thou as if thou hadst fallen into this deep abyss (of my knowledge, i. e. learn of me).

'If people would withdraw the veil from the face of my knowledge, they would find that what those who are far advanced in knowledge call certainty, is with me the faintest dawn of thought.

'If people would take the screen from the eye of my knowledge, they would find that what is revelation (ecstatic knowledge) for the wise, is but drunken madness for me.

'If I were to bring forth what is in my mind, I wonder whether the spirit of the age could bear it.

'My vessel does not require the wine of the friendship of time; my own blood is the basis of the wine of my enthusiasm.'

I wish we could explore together in this spirit the ancient religions of mankind, for I feel convinced that the more we know of them, the more we shall see that there is not one which is entirely false; nay, that in one sense every religion was a true religion, being the only religion which was possible at the time, which was compatible with the language, the thoughts, and the sentiments of each generation, which was appropriate to the age of the world. I know full well the objections that will be made to this. Was the worship of Moloch, it will be said, a true religion when they burnt their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods? Was the worship of Mylitta, or is the worship of Kâlî a true religion, when within the sanctuary of their temples they committed abominations that must be nameless? Was the teaching of Buddha a true religion, when men were asked to believe that the highest reward of virtue and meditation consisted in a complete annihilation of the soul?

Such arguments may tell in party warfare, though even there they have provoked fearful retaliation. Can that be a true religion, it

has been answered, which consigned men of holy innocence to the flames, because they held that the Son was like unto the Father, but not the same as the Father, or because they would not worship the Virgin and the Saints? Can that be a true religion which screened the same nameless crimes behind the sacred walls of monasteries? Can that be a true religion which taught the eternity of punishment without any hope of pardon or salvation for the sinner, however penitent?

People who judge of religions in that spirit will never understand their real purport, will never reach their sacred springs. These are the excrescences, the inevitable excrescences of all religions. We might as well judge of the health of a people from its hospitals, or of its morality from its prisons. If we want to judge of a religion, we must try to study it as much as possible in the mind of its founder; and when that is impossible, as it is but too often, try to find it in the lonely chamber and the sick-room, rather than in the colleges of augurs and the councils of priests.

If we do this, and if we bear in mind that religion must accommodate itself to the intel-

lectual capacities of those whom it is to influence, we shall be surprised to find much of true religion where we only expected degrading superstition or an absurd worship of idols.

The intention of religion, wherever we meet it, is always holy. However imperfect, however childish a religion may be, it always places the human soul in the presence of God; and however imperfect and however childish the conception of God may be, it always represents the highest ideal of perfection which the human soul, for the time being, can reach and grasp. Religion therefore places the human soul in the presence of its highest ideal, it lifts it above the level of ordinary goodness, and produces at least a yearning after a higher and better life—a life in the light of God.

The expression that is given to these early manifestations of religious sentiment is no doubt frequently childish: it may be irreverent or even repulsive. But has not every father to learn the lesson of a charitable interpretation in watching the first stammerings of religion in his children? Why, then, should people find it so difficult to learn the same lesson in the ancient history of the world,

and to judge in the same spirit the religious utterances of the childhood of the human race? Who does not recollect the startling and seemingly irreverent questionings of children about God, and who does not know how perfectly guiltless the child's mind is of real irreverence? Such outbursts of infantine religion hardly bear repeating. I shall only mention one instance. I well recollect the dismay which was created by a child exclaiming, 'Oh! I wish there was at least *one* room in the house where I could play alone, and where God could not see me!' People who heard it were shocked; but to my mind, I confess, this childish exclamation sounded more truthful and wonderful than even the Psalm of David, 'Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?'

It is the same with the childish language of ancient religion. We say very calmly that God is omniscient and omnipresent. Hesiod speaks of the sun, as the eye of Zeus, that sees and perceives everything. Aratus wrote, 'Full of Zeus are all the streets, all the markets of men; full of Him is the sea and the harbours .... and we are also His offspring.'

A Vedic poet, though of more modern date than the one I quoted before, speaking of the same Varu*n*a whom Vasish*th*a invoked, says: 'The great lord of these worlds sees as if he were near. If a man thinks he is walking by stealth, the gods know it all. If a man stands or walks or rides, if he goes to lie down or to get up, what two people sitting together whisper, King Varu*n*a knows it, he is there as a third. This earth, too, belongs to Varu*n*a, the king, and this wide sky with its ends far apart. The two seas (the sky and the ocean) are Varu*n*a's loins; he is also contained in this small drop of water. He who should flee far beyond the sky, even he would not be rid of Varu*n*a, the king. His spies proceed from heaven towards this world; with thousand eyes they overlook this earth. King Varu*n*a sees all this, what is between heaven and earth, and what is beyond. He has counted the twinklings of our eyes. As a player throws down the dice, he settles all things[1].'

[1] Chips from a German Workshop, i. 41. Atharva-veda, iv. 16.

I do not deny that there is in this hymn much that is childish, that it contains expressions unworthy of the majesty of the Deity; but if I look at the language and the thoughts of the people who composed these hymns more than three thousand years ago, I wonder rather at the happy and pure expression which they have given to these deep thoughts than at the occasional harshnesses which jar upon our ears.

These are the words of a Hindu convert, when he went back to India to preach the Gospel: 'Now I am not going to India to injure the feelings of the people by saying, "Your Scripture is all nonsense, anything outside the Old and New Testament is good for nothing." No, I tell you, I will appeal to the Hindu philosophers and moralists and poets, at the same time bringing to them my light, and reasoning with them in the spirit of Christ. That will be my work. We have sayings to this effect: "He who would be greatest shall be least." You cannot call this nonsense, for it is the saying of our Saviour, "Whosoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant." The missionaries, kind,

earnest, devoted as they are, do not know these things, and at once exclude everything bearing the name of Hindu. Go to Egypt, and you will find some pieces of stone, beautifully carved and ornamented, that seem to have been part of some large building, and by examining these, you can imagine how magnificent this structure must have been. Go to India, and examine the common sayings of the people, and you will be surprised to see what a splendid religion the Hindu religion must have been[1].'

Ancient language is a difficult instrument to handle, particularly for religious purposes. It is impossible to express abstract ideas except by metaphor, and it is not too much to say that the whole dictionary of ancient religion is made up of metaphors. With us these metaphors are all forgotten. We speak of spirit without thinking of breath, of heaven without thinking of the sky, of pardon without thinking of a release, of revelation without thinking of a veil. But in ancient language

[1] Brief Account of Joguth Chundra Gangooly, a Brahman of High Caste and a Convert to Christianity. London, 1860.

every one of these words, nay, every word that does not refer to sensuous objects, is still in a chrysalis stage: half material and half spiritual, and rising and falling in its character according to the varying capacities of speakers and hearers. Here is a constant source of misunderstandings, many of which have maintained their place in the religion and in the mythology of the ancient world. There are two distinct tendencies to be observed in the growth of ancient religion. There is, on the one side, the struggle of the mind against the material character of language, a constant attempt to strip words of their coarse covering, and fit them, by main force, for the purposes of abstract thought. But there is, on the other side, a constant relapse from the spiritual into the material, and, strange to say, a predilection for the material sense instead of the spiritual. This action and reaction has been going on in the language of religion from the earliest times, and it is at work even now.

It seems at first a fatal element in religion that it cannot escape from this flux and reflux of human thought, which is repeated at least once in every generation between father and

son, between mother and daughter; but if we watch it more closely we shall find, I think, that this flux and reflux constitutes the very life of religion.

Place yourselves in the position of those who first are said to have worshipped the sky. We say that they worshipped the sky, or that the sky was their god; and in one sense this is true, but in a sense very different from that which is usually attached to such statements. If we use 'god' in the sense which it has now, then to say that the sky was their god is to say what is simply impossible. Such a word as God, in the sense in which we use it—such a word even as *deus* and *θεός*, in Latin and Greek, or *deva* in Sanskrit, which could be used as a general predicate—did not and could not exist at that early time in the history of thought and speech. If we want to understand ancient religion, we must first try to understand ancient language.

Let us remember, then, that the first materials of language supply expressions for such impressions only as are received through the senses. If, therefore, there was a root meaning to burn, to be bright, to warm, such a

root might supply a recognised name for the sun and for the sky.

But let us now imagine, as well as we can, the process which went on in the human mind before the name of sky could be torn away from its material object and be used as the name of something totally different from the sky. There was in the heart of man, from the very first, a feeling of incompleteness, of weakness, of dependence, whatever we like to call it in our abstract language. We can explain it as little as we can explain why the newborn child feels the cravings of hunger and thirst. But it was so from the first, and is so even now. Man knows not whence he comes and whither he goes. He looks for a guide, for a friend; he wearies for some one on whom he can rest; he wants something like a father in heaven. In addition to all the impressions which he received from the outer world, there was in the heart of man a stronger impulse from within—a sigh, a yearning, a call for something that should not come and go like everything else, that should be before, and after, and for ever, that should hold and support everything, that should make

man feel at home in this strange world. Before this vague yearning could assume any definite shape it wanted a name: it could not be fully grasped or clearly conceived except by naming it. But where to look for a name? No doubt the storehouse of language was there, but from every name that was tried the mind of man shrank back because it did not fit, because it seemed to fetter rather than to wing the thought that fluttered within and called for light and freedom.

But when at last a name or even many names were tried and chosen, let us see what took place, as far as the mind of man was concerned. A certain satisfaction, no doubt, was gained by having a name or several names, however imperfect; but these names, like all other names, were but signs—poor, imperfect signs; they were predicates, and very partial predicates, of various small portions only of that vague and vast something which slumbered in the mind. When the name of the brilliant sky had been chosen, as it has been chosen at one time or other by nearly every nation upon earth, was sky the full expression of that within the mind which

wanted expression? Was the mind satisfied? Had the sky been recognised as its god? Far from it. People knew perfectly well what they meant by the visible sky; the first man who, after looking everywhere for what he wanted, and who at last in sheer exhaustion grasped at the name of sky as better than nothing, knew but too well that his success was after all a miserable failure. The brilliant sky was, no doubt, the most exalted, it was the only unchanging and infinite being that had received a name, and that could lend its name to that as yet unborn idea of the Infinite which disquieted the human mind. But let us only see this clearly, that the man who chose that name did not mean, could not have meant, that the visible sky was all he wanted, that the blue canopy above was his god.

And now observe what happens when the name sky has thus been given and accepted. The seeking and finding of such a name, however imperfect, was the act of a manly mind, of a poet, of a prophet, of a patriarch, who could struggle, like another Jacob, with the idea of God that was within him, till he had

conceived it, and brought it forth, and given it its name. But when that name had to be used with the young and the aged, with silly children and doting grandmothers, it was impossible to preserve it from being misunderstood. The first step downwards would be to look upon the sky as the abode of that Being which was called by the same name; the next step would be to forget altogether what was behind the name, and to implore the sky, the visible canopy over our heads, to send rain, to protect the fields, the cattle, and the corn, to give to man his daily bread. Nay, very soon those who warned the world that it was not the visible sky that was meant, but that what was meant was something high above, deep below, far away from the blue firmament, would be looked upon either as dreamers whom no one could understand, or as unbelievers who despised the sky, the great benefactor of the world. Lastly, many things that were true of the visible sky would be told of its divine namesake, and legends would spring up, destroying every trace of the deity that once was hidden beneath that ambiguous name.

I call this variety of acceptation, this misunderstanding, which is inevitable in ancient and also in modern religion, the *dialectic growth and decay*, or, if you like, the *dialectic life of religion*, and we shall see again and again, how important it is in enabling us to form a right estimate of religious language and thought. The dialectic shades in the language of religion are almost infinite; they explain the decay, but they also account for the life of religion. You may remember that Jacob Grimm, in one of his poetical moods, explained the origin of High and Low German, of Sanskrit and Prakrit, of Doric and Ionic, by looking upon the high dialects as originally the language of men, upon the low dialects as originally the language of women and children. We can observe, I believe, the same parallel streams in the language of religion. There is a high and there is a low dialect; there is a broad and there is a narrow dialect; there are dialects for men and dialects for children, for clergy and laity, for the noisy streets and for the still and lonely chamber. And as the child on growing up to manhood has to unlearn the language of the

nursery, its religion, too, has to be translated from a feminine into a more masculine dialect. This does not take place without a struggle, and it is this constantly recurring struggle, this inextinguishable desire to recover itself, which keeps religion from utter stagnation. From first to last religion is oscillating between these two opposite poles, and it is only if the attraction of one of the two poles becomes too strong, that the healthy movement ceases, and stagnation and decay set in. If religion cannot accommodate itself on the one side to the capacity of children, or if on the other side it fails to satisfy the requirements of men, it has lost its vitality, and it becomes either mere superstition or mere philosophy.

If I have succeeded in expressing myself clearly, I think you will understand in what sense it may be said that there is truth in all religions, even in the lowest. The intention which led to the first utterance of a name like sky, used no longer in its material sense, but in a higher sense, was right. The spirit was willing, but language was weak. The mental process was not, as commonly supposed, an

identification of the definite idea of deity with sky. Such a process is hardly conceivable. It was, on the contrary, a first attempt at defining the indefinite impression of deity by a name that should approximately or metaphorically render at least one of its most prominent features. The first framer of that name of the deity, I repeat it again, could as little have thought of the material heaven as we do when we speak of the kingdom of heaven[1].

And now let us observe another feature of ancient religion that has often been so startling, but which, if we only remember what is the nature of ancient language, becomes likewise perfectly intelligible. It is well known that ancient languages are particularly rich in synonymes, or, to speak more correctly, that in them the same object is called by many names —is, in fact, *polyonymous*. While in modern languages most objects have one name only, we find in ancient Sanskrit, in ancient Greek and Arabic, a large choice of words for the same object. This is perfectly natural. Each name could express one side only of whatever

[1] Medhurst, Inquiry, p. 20.

had to be named, and, not satisfied with one partial name, the early framers of language produced one name after the other, and after a time retained those which seemed most useful for special purposes. Thus, the sky might be called not only the brilliant, but the dark, the covering, the thundering, the rain-giving. This is the *polyonomy* of language, and it is what we are accustomed to call *polytheism* in religion. The same mental yearning which found its first satisfaction in using the name of the brilliant sky as an indication of the Divine, would soon grasp at other names of the sky, not expressive of brilliancy, and therefore more appropriate to a religious mood in which the Divine was conceived as dark, awful, all-powerful. Thus we find by the side of Dyaus, another name of the covering sky, Varu*n*a, originally only another attempt at naming the Divine, but which, like the name of Dyaus, soon assumed a separate and independent existence.

And this is not all. The very imperfection of all the names that had been chosen, their very inadequacy to express the fulness and infinity of the Divine, would keep up the search for new names, till at last every part

of nature in which an approach to the Divine could be discovered was chosen as a name of the Omnipresent. If the presence of the Divine was perceived in the strong wind, the strong wind became its name; if its presence was perceived in the earthquake and the fire, the earthquake and the fire became its names.

Do you still wonder at polytheism or at mythology? Why, they are inevitable. They are, if you like, a *parler enfantin* of religion. But the world has its childhood, and when it was a child it spoke as a child, it understood as a child, it thought as a child; and, I say again, in that it spoke as a child its language was true, in that it believed as a child its religion was true. The fault rests with us, if we insist on taking the language of children for the language of men, if we attempt to translate literally ancient into modern language, oriental into occidental speech, poetry into prose.

It is perfectly true that at present few interpreters, if any, would take such expressions as the head, the face, the mouth, the lips, the breath of Jehovah in a literal sense.

Per questo la Scrittura condescende
A vostra facultate, e piedi e mano
Attribuisce a Dio, et altro intende[1].

But what does it mean, then, if we hear one of our most honest and most learned theologians declare that he can no longer read from the altar the words of the Bible, 'God spake these words and said'? If we can make allowance for mouth and lips and breath, we can surely make the same allowance for words and their utterance. The language of antiquity is the language of childhood: ay, and we ourselves, when we try to reach the Infinite and the Divine by means of more abstract terms, are we even now better than children trying to place a ladder against the sky?

The *parler enfantin* in religion is not extinct; it never will be. Not only have some of the ancient childish religions been kept alive, as, for instance, the religion of India, which is to my mind like a half-fossilised megatherion walking about in the broad daylight of the nineteenth century; but in our own religion and in the language of the New

[1] Dante, Paradiso, iv. 44–46.

Testament, there are many things which disclose their true meaning to those only who know what language is made of, who have not only ears to hear, but a heart to understand the real meaning of parables.

What I maintain, then, is this, that as we put the most charitable interpretation on the utterances of children, we ought to put the same charitable interpretation on the apparent absurdities, the follies, the errors, nay, even the horrors of ancient religion. When we read of Belus, the supreme god of the Babylonians, cutting off his head, that the blood flowing from it might be mixed with the dust out of which man was to be formed, this sounds horrible enough; but depend upon it what was originally intended by this myth was no more than this, that there is in man an element of Divine life: that 'we are also His offspring.'

The same idea existed in the ancient religion of the Egyptians, for we read, in the 17th chapter of their Ritual, that the Sun mutilated himself, and that from the stream of his blood he created all beings[1]. And the author of

[1] Vicomte de Rougé, in Annales de Philosophie chrétienne, Nov. 1869, p. 332.

Genesis, too, when he wishes to express the same idea, can only use the same human and symbolical language; he can only say that 'God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.'

If we have once learnt to be charitable and reasonable in the interpretation of the sacred books of other religions, we shall more easily learn to be charitable and reasonable in the interpretation of our own. We shall no longer try to force a literal sense on words which, if interpreted literally, must lose their true and original purport, we shall no longer interpret the Law and the Prophets as if they had been written in the English of our own century, but read them in a truly historical spirit, prepared for many difficulties, undismayed by any contradictions, which, so far from disproving the authenticity, become to the historian of ancient language and ancient thought the strongest confirmatory evidence of the age, the genuineness, and the real truth of ancient sacred books. Let us but treat our own sacred books with neither more nor less mercy than the sacred books of any other nations, and they will soon

regain that position and influence which they once possessed, but which the artificial and unhistorical theories of the last three centuries have well-nigh destroyed.

ON

FALSE ANALOGIES

IN

COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY[1].

VERY different from the real similarities that can be discovered in nearly all the religions of the world, and which, owing to their deeply human character, in no way necessitate the admission that one religion borrowed from the other, are those minute coincidences between the Jewish and the Pagan religions which have so often been discussed by learned theologians, and which were intended by them as proof positive, either that the Pagans borrowed their religious ideas direct from the Old Testament, or that some fragments of a primeval revelation, granted to the ancestors of the whole race of mankind, had been preserved in the temples of Greece and Italy.

[1] Reprinted from the Contemporary Review, April, 1870, 'A Chapter of Accidents in Comparative Theology.'

Bochart, in his Geographia Sacra, considered the identity of Noah and Saturn so firmly established as hardly to admit of the possibility of a doubt. The three sons of Saturn—Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto—he represented as having been originally the three sons of Noah: Jupiter being Ham; Neptune, Japhet; and Shem, Pluto. Even in the third generation the two families were proved to have been one, for Phut, the son of Ham, or of Jupiter Hammon, could be no other than Apollo Pythius; Canaan no other than Mercury; and Nimrod no other than Bacchus, whose original name was supposed to have been Bar-chus, the son of Cush. G. J. Vossius, in his learned work, De Origine et Progressu Idolatriæ (1688), identified Saturn with Adam, Janus with Noah, Pluto with Ham, Neptune with Japhet, Minerva with Naamah, Vulcan with Tubal Cain, Typhon with Og. Huet, the friend of Bochart, and the colleague of Bossuet, went still further; and in his classical work, the Demonstratio Evangelica, he attempted to prove that the whole theology of the heathen nations was borrowed from Moses, whom he identified not only with ancient law-

givers, like Zoroaster and Orpheus, but with gods and demigods, such as Apollo, Vulcan, Faunus, and Priapus.

All this happened not more than two hundred years ago; and even a hundred years ago, nay, even after the discovery of Sanskrit and the rise of Comparative Philology, the troublesome ghost of Huet was by no means laid at once. On the contrary, as soon as the ancient language and religion of India became known in Europe, they were received by many people in the same spirit. Sanskrit, like all other languages, was to be derived from Hebrew, the ancient religion of the Brahmans, from the Old Testament.

There was at that time an enthusiasm among Oriental scholars, particularly at Calcutta, and an interest for Oriental antiquities in the public at large, of which we in these days of apathy for Eastern literature can hardly form an adequate idea. Everybody wished to be first in the field, and to bring to light some of the treasures which were supposed to be hidden in the sacred literature of the Brahmans. Sir William Jones, the founder of the Asiatic Society at Calcutta, published in the first volume

of the Asiatic Researches his famous essay 'On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India;' and he took particular care to state that his essay, though published only in 1788, had been written in 1784. In that essay he endeavoured to show that there existed an intimate connexion, not only between the mythology of India and that of Greece and Italy, but likewise between the legendary stories of the Brahmans and the accounts of certain historical events as recorded in the Old Testament. No doubt, the temptation was great. No one could look down for a moment into the rich mine of religious and mythological lore that was suddenly opened before the eyes of scholars and theologians, without being struck by a host of similarities, not only in the languages, but also in the ancient traditions of the Hindus, the Greeks, and the Romans; and if at that time the Greeks and Romans were still supposed to have borrowed their language and their religion from Jewish quarters, the same conclusion could hardly be avoided with regard to the language and the religion of the Brahmans of India.

The first impulse to look in the ancient re-

ligion of India for reminiscences of revealed truth seems to have come from missionaries rather than from scholars. It arose from a motive, in itself most excellent, of finding some common ground for those who wished to convert and those who were to be converted. Only, instead of looking for that common ground where it really was to be found, namely, in the broad foundations on which all religions are built up,—the belief in a divine power, the acknowledgment of sin, the habit of prayer, the desire to offer sacrifice, and the hope of a future life,—the students of Pagan religion as well as Christian missionaries were bent on discovering more striking and more startling coincidences, in order to use them in confirmation of their favourite theory that some rays of a primeval revelation, or some reflection of the Jewish religion, had reached the uttermost ends of the world. This was a dangerous proceeding, —dangerous because superficial, dangerous because undertaken with a foregone conclusion; and very soon the same arguments that had been used on one side in order to prove that all religious truth had been derived from the

Old Testament, were turned against Christian scholars and Christian missionaries, in order to show that it was not Brahmanism and Buddhism which had borrowed from the Old and New Testament, but that the Old and the New Testament had borrowed from the more ancient religions of the Brahmans and Buddhists.

This argument was carried out, for instance, in Holwell's Original Principles of the Ancient Brahmans, published in London as early as 1779, in which the author maintains that 'the Brahmanic religion is the first and purest product of supernatural revelation,' and 'that the Hindu scriptures contain to a moral certainty the original doctrines and terms of restoration delivered from God himself, by the mouth of his first-created Birmah, to mankind, at his first creation in the form of man.'

Sir William Jones[1] tells us that one or two missionaries in India had been absurd enough, in their zeal for the conversion of the Gentiles, to urge 'that the Hindus were even now almost Christians, because their Brahma, Vishnu,

[1] Asiatic Researches, i. p. 272.

and Mahesa were no other than the Christian Trinity;' a sentence in which, he adds, we can only doubt whether folly, ignorance, or impiety predominates.

Sir William Jones himself was not likely to fall into that error. He speaks against it most emphatically. 'Either,' he says, 'the first eleven chapters of Genesis—all due allowance being made for a figurative Eastern style—are true, or the whole fabric of our national religion is false; a conclusion which none of us, I trust, would wish to be drawn. But it is not the truth of our national religion as such that I have at heart; it is truth itself; and if any cool, unbiassed reasoner will clearly convince me that Moses drew his narrative through Egyptian conduits from the primeval fountains of Indian literature, I shall esteem him as a friend for having weeded my mind from a capital error, and promise to stand amongst the foremost in assisting to circulate the truth which he has ascertained.'

But though he speaks so strongly against the uncritical proceedings of those who would derive anything that is found in the Old Testament from Indian sources, Sir William Jones

was really guilty of the same want of critical caution in his own attempts to identify the gods and heroes of Greece and Rome with the gods and heroes of India. He begins his essay[1], 'On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India,' with the following remarks:—

'We cannot justly conclude, by arguments preceding the proof of facts, that one idolatrous people must have borrowed their deities, rites, and tenets from another, since gods of all shapes and dimensions may be framed by the boundless powers of imagination, or by the frauds and follies of men, in countries never connected; but when features of resemblance, too strong to have been accidental, are observable in different systems of polytheism, without fancy or prejudice to colour them and improve the likeness, we can scarce help believing that some connexion has immemorially subsisted between the several nations who have adopted them. It is my design in this essay to point out such a resemblance between the popular worship of the old Greeks and Italians and that of the Hindus; nor can there be any room

[1] Asiatic Researches, i. p. 221.

to doubt of a great similarity between their strange religions and that of Egypt, China, Persia, Phrygia, Phœnice, and Syria; to which, perhaps, we may safely add some of the southern kingdoms, and even islands of America; while the Gothic system which prevailed in the northern regions of Europe was not merely similar to those of Greece and Italy, but almost the same in another dress, with an embroidery of images apparently Asiatic. From all this, if it be satisfactorily proved, we may infer a general union or affinity between the most distinguished inhabitants of the primitive world at the time when they deviated, as they did too early deviate, from the rational adoration of the only true God.'

Here, then, in an essay written nearly a hundred years ago by Sir W. Jones, one of the most celebrated Oriental scholars in England, it might seem as if we should find the first outlines of that science which is looked upon as but of to-day or yesterday,—the outlines of Comparative Mythology. But in such an expectation we are disappointed. What we find is merely a superficial comparison of the mythology of India and that of other nations,

both Aryan and Semitic, without any scientific value, because carried out without any of those critical tests which alone keep Comparative Mythology from running riot. This is not intended as casting a slur on Sir W. Jones. At his time the principles which have now been established by the students of the science of language were not yet known, and as with words, so with the names of deities, similarity of sound, the most treacherous of all sirens, was the only guide in such researches.

It is not pleasant to have to find fault with a man possessed of such genius, taste, and learning as Sir W. Jones, but no one who is acquainted with the history of these researches will be surprised at my words. It is the fate of all pioneers, not only to be left behind in the assault which they had planned, but to find that many of their approaches were made in a false direction, and had to be abandoned. But as the authority of their names continues to sway the public at large, and is apt to mislead even painstaking students and to entail upon them repeated disappointments, it is necessary that those who know should speak

out, even at the risk of being considered harsh or presumptuous.

A few instances will suffice to show how utterly baseless the comparisons are which Sir W. Jones instituted between the gods of India, Greece, and Italy. He compares the Latin Janus with the Sanskrit deity Ga*n*e*s*a. It is well known that Janus is connected with the same root that has yielded the names of Jupiter, Zeus, and Dyaus, while Ga*n*e*s*a is a compound, meaning lord of hosts, lord of the companies of gods.

Saturnus is supposed to have been the same as Noah, and is then identified by Sir W. Jones with the Indian Manu Satyavrata, who escaped from the flood. Ceres is compared with the goddess *Ś*ri, Jupiter or Diespiter with Indra or Divaspati; and, though etymology is called a weak basis for historical inquiries, the three syllables Jov in Jovis, Zeu in Zeus, and Siv in Siva are placed side by side, as possibly containing the same root, only differently pronounced. Now the s of *Ś*iva is a palatal s, and no scholar who has once looked into a book on Comparative Philology need be told that such an

s could never correspond to a Greek Zeta or a Latin J.

In K*r*ish*n*a, the lovely shepherd-god, Sir W. Jones recognises the features of Apollo Nomius, who fed the herds of Admetus, and slew the dragon Python; and he leaves it to etymologists to determine whether Gopâla, *i. e.* the cow-herd, may not be the same word as Apollo. We are also assured, on the authority of Colonel Vallancey, that K*r*ish*n*a in Irish means the sun, and that the goddess Kâlî, to whom human sacrifices were offered, as enjoined in the Vedas (?), was the same as Hekate. In conclusion, Sir W. Jones remarks, 'I strongly incline to believe that Egyptian priests have actually come from the Nile to the Gangâ and Yamunâ, and that they visited the *S*armans of India, as the sages of Greece visited them, rather to acquire than to impart knowledge.'

The interest that had been excited by Sir William Jones's researches did not subside, though he himself did not return to the subject, but devoted his great powers to more useful labours. Scholars, both in India and in Europe, wanted to know more of the ancient religion of India. If Jupiter, Apollo, and Janus

had once been found in the ancient pantheon of the Brahmans; if the account of Noah and the deluge could be traced back to the story of Manu Satyavrata, who escaped from the flood, more discoveries might be expected in this newly-opened mine, and people rushed to it with all the eagerness of gold-diggers. The idea that everything in India was of extreme antiquity had at that time taken a firm hold on the minds of all students of Sanskrit; and, as there was no one to check their enthusiasm, everything that came to light in Sanskrit literature was readily accepted as more ancient than Homer, or even than the Old Testament.

It was under these influences that Lieutenant Wilford, a contemporary of Sir William Jones at Calcutta, took up the thread which Sir William Jones had dropped, and determined at all hazards to solve the question which at that time had excited a world-wide interest. Convinced that the Brahmans possessed in their ancient literature the originals, not only of Greek and Roman mythology, but likewise of the Old Testament history, he tried every possible means to overcome their reserve and reticence. He related to them, as well as he

could, the principal stories of classical mythology, and the leading events in the history of the Old Testament; he assured them that they would find the same things in their ancient books, if they would but look for them; he held out the hopes of ample rewards for any extracts from their sacred literature containing the histories of Adam and Eve, of Deukalion and Prometheus; and at last he succeeded. The coyness of the Pandits yielded; the incessant demand created a supply; and for several years essay after essay appeared in the Asiatic Researches, with extracts from Sanskrit MSS., containing not only the names of Deukalion, Prometheus, and other heroes and deities of Greece, but likewise the names of Adam and Eve, of Abraham and Sarah, and all the rest.

Great was the surprise, still greater the joy, not only in Calcutta, but in London, at Paris, and all the universities of Germany. The Sanskrit MSS. from which Lieutenant Wilford quoted, and on which his theories were based, were submitted to Sir W. Jones and other scholars; and though many persons were surprised and for a time even incredulous, yet the fact could not be denied that all was found

in these Sanskrit MSS. as stated by Lieutenant Wilford, Sir W. Jones, then President of the Asiatic Society, printed the following declaration at the end of the third volume of the Asiatic Researches :—

'Since I am persuaded that the learned essay on Egypt and the Nile has afforded you equal delight with that which I have myself received from it, I cannot refrain from endeavouring to increase your satisfaction by confessing openly that I have at length abandoned the greatest part of the natural distrust and incredulity which had taken possession of my mind before I had examined the sources from which our excellent associate, Lieutenant Wilford, has drawn so great a variety of new and interesting opinions. Having lately read again and again, both alone and with a Pandit, the numerous original passages in the Purâṇas, and other Sanskrit books, which the writer of the dissertation adduces in support of his assertions, I am happy in bearing testimony to his perfect good faith and general accuracy, both in his extracts and in the translation of them.'

Sir W. Jones then proceeds to give himself

a translation of some of these passages. 'The following translation,' he writes, 'of an extract from the Padma-purâna is minutely exact:'—

'1. To *Satyavarman*, the sovereign of the whole earth, were born three sons; the eldest *Sherma;* then *Charma;* and thirdly, *Jyapeti.*

'2. They were all men of good morals, excellent in virtue and virtuous deeds, skilled in the use of weapons to strike with, or to be thrown, brave men, eager for victory in battle.

'3. But *Satyavarman*, being continually delighted with devout meditation, and seeing his sons fit for dominion, laid upon them the burden of government,

'4. Whilst he remained honouring and satisfying the gods, and priests, and kine. One day, by the act of destiny, the king, having drunk mead,

'5. Became senseless, and lay asleep naked; then was he seen by *Charma*, and by him were his two brothers called.

'6. To whom he said: What now has befallen? In what state is this our sire? By those two was he hidden with clothes, and called to his senses again and again.

'7. Having recovered his intellect, and per-

fectly knowing what had passed, he cursed *Charma*, saying, Thou shalt be the servant of servants;

'8. And since thou wast a laugher in their presence, from laughter shalt thou acquire a name. Then he gave to *Sherma* the wide domain on the south of the snowy mountains.

'9. And to *Jyapeti* he gave all on the north of the snowy mountains; but he, by the power of religious contemplation, obtained supreme bliss.'

After this testimony from Sir W. Jones, wrung from him, as it would seem, against his own wish and will, Lieutenant Wilford's essays became more numerous and more startling with every year.

At last, however, the coincidences became too great. The MSS. were again carefully examined; and then it was found that a clever forgery had been committed, that leaves had been inserted in ancient MSS., and that on these leaves the Pandits, urged by Lieutenant Wilford to disclose their ancient mysteries and traditions, had rendered in correct Sanskrit verse all that they had heard about Adam and Abraham from their inquisitive master.

Lieutenant (then Colonel) Wilford did not hesitate for one moment to confess publicly that he had been imposed upon; but in the meantime the mischief had been done, his essays had been read all over Europe, they retained their place in the volumes of the Asiatic Researches, and to the present day some of his statements and theories continue to be quoted authoritatively by writers on ancient religion.

Such accidents, and, one might almost say, such misfortunes, will happen, and it would be extremely unfair were we to use unnecessarily harsh language with regard to those to whom they have happened. It is perfectly true that at present, after the progress that has been made in an accurate and critical study of Sanskrit, it would be unpardonable if any Sanskrit scholar accepted such passages as those translated by Sir W. Jones as genuine. Yet it is by no means certain that a further study of Sanskrit will not lead to similar disenchantments, and deprive many a book in Sanskrit literature, which now is considered as very ancient, of its claims to any high antiquity. Certain portions of the Veda even, which, as

far as our knowledge goes at present, we are perfectly justified in referring to the tenth or twelfth century before our era, may some day or other dwindle down from their high estate, and those who have believed in their extreme antiquity will then be held up to blame or ridicule, like Sir W. Jones or Colonel Wilford. This cannot be avoided, for science is progressive, and does not acknowledge, even in the most distinguished scholars, any claims to infallibility. One lesson only may we learn from the disappointment that befell Colonel Wilford, and that is to be on our guard against anything which in ordinary language would be called 'too good to be true.'

Comparative Philology has taught us again and again that when we find a word exactly the same in Greek and Sanskrit, we may be certain that it cannot be the same word; and the same applies to Comparative Mythology. The same god or the same hero cannot have exactly the same name in Sanskrit and Greek, for the simple reason that Sanskrit and Greek have deviated from each other, have both followed their own way, have both suffered their own phonetic corruptions; and hence, if they

do possess the same word, they can only possess it either in its Greek or its Sanskrit disguise. And if that caution applies to Sanskrit and Greek, members of the same family of language, how much more strongly must it apply to Sanskrit and Hebrew! If the first man were called in Sanskrit Adima, and in Hebrew Adam, and if the two were really the same word, then Hebrew and Sanskrit could not be members of two different families of speech, or we should be driven to admit that Adam was borrowed by the Jews from the Hindus, for it is in Sanskrit only that Adima means the first, whereas in Hebrew it has no such meaning.

The same remark applies to a curious coincidence pointed out many years ago by Mr. Ellis in his Polynesian Researches (London, 1829, vol. ii. p. 38). We there read:

'A very generally received Tahitian tradition is that the first human pair were made by Taaroa, the principal deity formerly acknowledged by the nation. On more than one occasion, I have listened to the details of the people respecting his work of creation. They say, that after Taaroa had formed the world,

he created man out of araea, red earth, which was also the food of man until bread first was made. In connexion with this some relate that Taaroa one day called for the man by name. When he came, he caused him to fall asleep, that, while he slept, he took out one of his *ivi*, or bones, and with it made a woman, whom he gave to the man as his wife, and that they became the progenitors of mankind. This,' Mr. Ellis continues, 'always appeared to me a mere recital of the Mosaic account of creation, which they had heard from some European, and I never placed any reliance on it, although they have repeatedly told me, it was a tradition among them before any foreigners arrived. Some have also stated that the woman's name was *Ivi*, which would be by them pronounced as if written *Eve*. *Ivi* is an aboriginal word, and not only signifies a bone, but also a widow, and a victim slain in war. Notwithstanding the assertion of the natives, I am disposed to think that *Ivi*, or *Eve*, is the only aboriginal part of the story, as far as it respects the mother of the human race. Should more careful and minute inquiry confirm the truth of this declaration, and prove

that their account was in existence among them prior to their intercourse with Europeans, it will be the most remarkable and valuable oral tradition of the origin of the human race yet known.'

In this case, I believe the probability is that the story of the creation of the first woman from the bone of a man[1] existed among the Tahitians before their intercourse with Christians, but I need hardly add that the similarity between the Polynesian name for bone, *ivi*, even when it was used as the name of the first woman, and the English corruption of the Hebrew חַוָּה, Chāvah, Eve, could be the result of accident only. Whatever Chāvah meant in Hebrew, whether life or living or anything else, it never meant bone, while the Tahitian *ivi*, the Maori *wheva*, meant bone, and bone only.

These principles and these cautions were hardly thought of in the days of Sir William Jones and Colonel Wilford, but they ought to be thought of at present. Thus, before Bopp had laid down his code of phonetic laws, and before Burnouf had written his works on Buddhism, one cannot be very much surprised that

[1] See p. 48.

Buddha should have been identified with Minos and Lamech; nay, that even the Babylonian deity Belus, and the Teutonic deity Wodan or Odin, should have been supposed to be connected with the founder of Buddhism in India. But we did not expect that we should have to read again, in a book published in 1869, such statements as these[1]:—

'There is certainly a much greater similarity between the Buddhism of the Topes and the Scandinavian mythology than between it and the Buddhism of the books; but still the gulf between the two is immense; and if any traces of the doctrines of the gentle ascetic (Buddha) ever existed in the bosom of Odin or his followers, while dwelling near the roots of the Caucasus, all that can be said is, that they suffered fearful shipwreck among the rocks of the savage superstitions of the north, and sank, never again to appear on the surface of Scandinavian mythology. If the two religions come anywhere in contact, it is at their base, for underlying both there existed a strange

[1] Tree and Serpent Worship, by James Fergusson. London: 1868.

substratum of Tree and Serpent Worship; on this the two structures seem to have been raised, though they afterwards diverged into forms so strangely dissimilar.' (p. 34.)

Or again (p. 32):—

'We shall probably not err far if we regard these traces of Serpent Worship as indicating the presence in the North East of Scotland of the head of that column of migration, or of propagandism, which, under the myth of Wodenism, we endeavoured in a previous chapter to trace from the Caucasus to Scandinavia.'

'The arbors under which two of the couples are seated are curious instances of that sort of summer-house which may be found adorning tea-gardens in the neighbourhood of London to the present day. It is scenes like these that make us hesitate before asserting that there could not possibly be any connexion between Buddhism and Wodenism.' (p. 140.)

'One of the most tempting nominal similarities connected with this subject is suggested by the name of Mâyâ. The mother of Buddha was called Mâyâ. The mother of Mercury was also Maia, the daughter of Atlas. The Romans always called Wodin, Mercury, and *dies*

Mercurii and *Wodensday* alike designated the fourth-day of the week. . . . . These and other similarities have been frequently pointed out and insisted upon, and they are too numerous and too distinct not to have some foundation in reality.' (p. 186, note.)

Statements like these cannot be allowed to pass unnoticed or uncontradicted, particularly if supported by the authority of a great name; and after having spoken so freely of the unscientific character of the mythological comparisons instituted by scholars like Sir William Jones and Lieutenant Wilford, who can no longer defend themselves, it would be mere cowardice to shrink from performing the same unpleasant duty in the case of a living writer, who has shown that he knows how to wield the weapons both of defence and attack.

It is perfectly true that the mother of Buddha was called Mâyâ, but it is equally true that the Sanskrit Mâyâ cannot be the Greek Maia. It is quite true also that the fourth day of the week is called *dies Mercurii* in Latin, and Wednesday in English; nay, that in Sanskrit the same day is called *Budha-dina* or *Budha-vāra!* But the origin of all these names falls

within perfectly historical times, and can throw no light whatever on the early growth of mythology and religion.

First of all, we have to distinguish between *Budha* and *Buddha*. The two names, though so like each other, and therefore constantly mistaken one for the other, have nothing in common but their root. *Buddha* with two d's, is the participle of *budh*, and means awakened, enlightened[1]. It is the name given to those who have reached the highest stage of human wisdom, and it is known most generally as the title of Gotama, Sâkya-muni, the founder of Buddhism, whose era dates from 543 B.C. *Budha*, on the contrary, with one d, means simply knowing, and it became in later times, when the Hindus received from the Greeks a knowledge of the planets, the name of the planet Mercury.

It is well known that the names of the seven days of the week are derived from the names of the planets[2], and it is equally well known

[1] See Buddhaghosha's Parables, translated by Captain Rogers, with an introduction containing Buddha's Dhammapada, translated from Pâli, by M. M., 1870, p. 110, note.

[2] Hare, On the Names of the Days of the Week (Philol.

that in Europe the system of weeks and week-days is comparatively of very modern origin. It was not a Greek, nor a Roman, nor a Hindu, but a Jewish or Chaldean invention. The Sabbath (Sabbata) was known and kept at Rome in the first century B.C., with many superstitious practices. It is mentioned by Horace, Ovid, Tibullus (*dies Saturni*), Persius, Juvenal. Ovid calls it a day '*rebus minus apta gerendis.*' Augustus (Suet. Aug. c. 76) evidently imagined that the Jews fasted on their Sabbath, for he said, 'Not even a Jew keeps the fast of the Sabbath so strictly as I have kept this day.' In fact, Josephus (Contra Apion. ii. 39) was able to say, that there was no town, Greek or not Greek, where the custom of observing the seventh day had not spread[1]. It

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Museum, Nov. 1831); Ideler, Handbuch der Chronologie, p. 177; Grimm, Deutsche Mythologie, p. 111.

[1] A writer in the Index objects to my representation of what Josephus said with regard to the observance of the seventh day in Greek and barbarian towns. He writes:

'*Washington, D. C., Nov.* 9, 1872.

'The very able and learned article by Max Müller in the Index of this week contains, I think, one error, caused doubtless by his taking a false translation of a passage from

is curious that we find the seventh day, the Sabbath, even under its new Pagan name, as

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Josephus instead of the original. "In fact," says Professor Müller, "Josephus (Contra Apion. ii. 39) was able to say that there was no town, Greek or not Greek, where the custom of observing the seventh day had not spread." Mr. Wm. B. Taylor, in a discussion of the Sabbath question with the Rev. Dr. Brown of Philadelphia, in 1853 (Obligation of the Sabbath, p. 120), gives this rendering of the passage:— "Nor is there anywhere any city of the Greeks, nor a single barbarian nation, whither the institution of the Hebdomade (*which we mark by resting*) has not travelled;" then in a note Mr. Taylor gives the original Greek of part of the passage, and adds: "Josephus does not say that the Greek and barbarian rested, but that *we* [the Jews] observe it by rest."

'The corrected translation only adds strength to Max Müller's position in regard to the very limited extent of Sabbath observance in ancient times; and Mr. Taylor brings very strong historical proof to maintain the assertion [p. 24] that "throughout all history we discover no trace of a Sabbath among the nations of antiquity."'

It seems to me that if we read the whole of Josephus' work, On the Antiquity of the Jews, we cannot fail to perceive that what Josephus wished to show towards the end of the second book was that other nations had copied or were trying to copy the Jewish customs. He says: Ὑφ' ἡμῶν τε *διηλέχθησαν οἱ νόμοι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις, ἀεὶ καὶ μᾶλλον αὐτῶν ζῆλον ἐμπεποιήκασι.* He then says that the early Greek philosophers, though apparently original in their theoretic speculations, followed the Jewish laws with regard to practical and moral precepts. Then follows this sentence: Οὐ *μὴν*

dies Saturni or *Kronike* mentioned by Roman and Greek writers, before the names of the other days of the week made their appearance. Tibullus speaks of the day of Saturn, *dies Saturni;* Julius Frontinus (under Nerva, 96–98) says that Vespasian attacked the Jews on the day of Saturn, *die Saturni;* and Justin Martyr (died 165) states that Christ was crucified the day before the day of Kronos, and appeared to his disciples the day after the day of Kronos. He does not use the names of Friday and Sunday. Sunday, as *dies Solis*, is mentioned by

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ἀλλὰ καὶ πλήθεσιν ἤδη πολὺς ζῆλος γέγονεν ἐκ μακροῦ τῆς ἡμετέρας εὐσεβείας, οὐ δ' ἔστιν οὐ πόλις Ἑλλήνων οὐδητισοῦν οὐδὲ βάρβαρος, οὐδὲ ἐν ἔθνος, ἔνθα μὴ τὸ τῆς ἑβδομάδος, ἣν ἀργοῦμεν ἡμεῖς, ἔθος οὐ διαπεφοίτηκε, καὶ αἱ νηστεῖαι καὶ λύχνων ἀνακαύσεις καὶ πολλὰ τῶν εἰς βρῶσιν ἡμῖν οὐ νενομισμένων παρατετήρηται. Μιμεῖσθαι δὲ πειρῶνται καὶ τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἡμῶν ὁμόνοιαν, κ. τ. λ. Standing where it stands the sentence about the *ἑβδομάς* can only mean that 'there is no town of Greeks nor of barbarians, nor one single people, where the custom of the seventh day, on which we rest, has not spread, and where fastings, and lighting of lamps, and much of what is forbidden to us with regard to food are not observed. They try to imitate our mutual concord, &c.' Hebdomas, which originally meant the week, is here clearly used in the sense of the seventh day, and though Josephus may exaggerate, what he says is certainly 'that there was no town, Greek or not Greek, where the custom of observing the seventh day had not spread.'

Justin Martyr (Apolog. i. 67), and by Tertullian (died 220), the usual name of that day amongst Christians being the Lord's-day, Κυριακή, *dominica*, or *dominicus*. Clemens of Alexandria (died 220) seems to have been the first who used the names of Wednesday and Friday, Ἑρμοῦ καὶ Ἀφροδίτης ἡμέρα.

It is generally stated, on the authority of Cassius Dio, that the system of counting by weeks and week-days was first introduced in Egypt, and that at his time, early in the third century, the Romans had adopted it, though but recently. Be this as it may, it would seem that, if Tibullus could use the name of *dies Saturni* for Saturday, the whole system of week-days must have been settled and known at Rome in his time. Cassius Dio tells us that the names were assigned to each day διὰ τεσσάρων, by fours; or by giving the first hour of the week to Saturn, then giving one hour to each planet in succession, till the twenty-fifth hour became again the first of the next day. Both systems lead to the same result, as will be seen from the following table :—

Planets.	*Latin.*	*French.*	*Sanskrit.*
1 Saturn 1	Dies Saturni	Samedi (dies sabbati)	*Ś*ani-vāra
2 Jupiter 6	„ Solis	Dimanche (dominicus)	Ravi-vāra
3 Mars 4	„ Lunæ	Lundi	Soma-vāra
4 Sun 2	„ Martis	Mardi	Bhauma-vāra
5 Venus 7	„ Mercurii	Mercredi	Budha-vāra
6 Mercury 5	„ Jovis	Jeudi	*B*rihaspati-vāra
7 Moon 3	„ Veneris	Vendredi	*Ś*ukra-vāra

	Old Norse.	*Anglo-Saxon.*	*English.*
1 Saturn 1	laugardagr (washing day)	säter däg	Saturday
2 Jupiter 6	sunnudagr	sunnan däg	Sunday
3 Mars 4	mânadagr	monan däg	Monday
4 Sun 2	tysdagr	tives däg	Tuesday
5 Venus 7	odinsdagr	vodenes däg	Wednesday
6 Mercury 5	thôrsdagr	thunores däg	Thursday
7 Moon 3	friadagr	frige däg	Friday

	Old-High German.	*Middle-High German.*	*German.*
1 Saturn 1	sambaztag (sunnûn âband)	samztac (sunnen âbent)	Samstag (Sonnabend)
2 Jupiter 6	sunnûn dag	sunnen tac	Sonntag
3 Mars 4	mânin tac (?)	mân tac	Montag
4 Sun 2	ziuwes tac (cies dac)	zies tac (eritac)	Dienstag
5 Venus 7	wuotanes tac (?) (mittawecha)	mittwoch	Mittwoch
6 Mercury 5	donares tac	donres tac	Donnerstag
7 Moon 3	fria dag	fritac	Freitag

After the names of the week-days had once been settled, we have no difficulty in tracing their migration towards the East and towards

the West. The Hindus had their own peculiar system of reckoning days and months, but they adopted at a later time the foreign system of counting by weeks of seven days, and assigning a presiding planetary deity to each of the seven days, according to the system described above. As the Indian name of the planet Mercury was Budha, the *dies Mercurii* was naturally called *Budha-vâra*, but never *Buddha-vâra;* and the fact that the mother of Mercury was called Maia, and the mother of Buddha Mâyâ, could, therefore, have had no bearing whatever on the name assigned to the Indian Wednesday[1]. Whether the names of the planets were formed in India independently, or after Greek models, is difficult to settle. The name of Budha, the knowing or the clever, given to the planet Mercury, seems, however, inexplicable except on the latter hypothesis.

Having traced the origin of the Sanskrit name of the *dies Mercurii*, Budha-vâra, let us now see why the Teutonic nations, though

[1] Grimm, Deutsche Mythologie, p. 118, note.

perfectly ignorant of Buddhism, called the same day the day of Wodan.

That the Teutonic nations received the names of the week-days from their Greek and Roman neighbours admits of no doubt. For commercial and military arrangements between Romans and Germans some kind of *lingua franca* must soon have sprung up, and in it the names of the week-days must have found their place. There would have been little difficulty in explaining the meaning of Sun-day and Mon-day to the Germans, but in order to make them understand the meaning of the other names, some explanations must have been given on the nature of the different deities, in order to enable the Germans to find corresponding names in their own language. A Roman would tell his German friend that *dies Veneris* meant the day of a goddess who represented beauty and love, and on hearing this the German would at once have thought of his own goddess of love, *Freyja*, and have called the *dies Veneris* the day of *Freyja* or Friday[1].

[1] Grimm, Deutsche Mythologie, p. 276.

If *Jupiter* was described as the god who wields the thunderbolt, his natural representative in German would be *Donar*[1], the Anglo-Saxon *Thunar*, the Old Norse *Thor;* and hence the *dies Jovis* would be called the day of *Thor*, or Thursday. If the fact that Jupiter was the king of the gods had been mentioned, his proper representative in German would, no doubt, have been *Wuotan* or *Odin*[2]. As it was, *Wuotan* or *Odin* was chosen as the nearest approach to *Mercury*, the character which they share in common, and which led to their identification, being most likely their love of travelling through the air[3], also their granting wealth and fulfilling the wishes of their worshippers, in which capacity Wuotan is known by the name of *Wunsch*[4] or *Wish*. We can thus understand how it happened that father and son changed places, for while *Mercurius* is the son of *Jupiter*, *Wuotan* is the father of *Donar*. *Mars*, the god of war, was identified with the German *Tiu* or *Ziu*,

[1] Grimm, Deutsche Mythologie, p. 151.
[2] Ibid. p. 120.
[3] Ibid. pp. 137–148.
[4] Ibid. p. 126.

a name which, though originally the same as *Zeus* in Greek or *Dyaus* in Sanskrit, took a peculiarly national character among the Germans, and became their god of war[1].

There remained thus only the *dies Saturni*, the day of Saturn, and whether this was called so in imitation of the Latin name, or after an old German deity of a similar name and character, is a point which for the present we must leave unsettled.

What, however, is not unsettled is this, that if the Germans, in interpreting these names of Roman deities as well as they could, called the *dies Mercurii*, the same day which the Hindus had called the day of *Budha* (with one d), their day of *Wuotan*, this was not because 'the doctrines of the gentle ascetic existed in the bosom of Odin or his followers, while dwelling near the roots of the Caucasus,' but for very different and much more tangible reasons.

But, apart from all this, by what possible process could Buddha and Odin have ever

[1] Tacit. Hist. iv. 64: 'Communibus Diis et praecipuo Deorum Marti grates agimus.'

been brought together in the flesh? In the history of ancient religions, Odin belongs to the same stratum of mythological thought as *Dyaus* in India, *Zeus* in Greece, *Jupiter* in Italy. He was worshipped as the supreme deity during a period long anterior to the age of the Veda and of Homer. His travels in Greece, and even in Tyrkland[1], and his half-historical character as a mere hero and a leader of his people, are the result of the latest Euhemerism. Buddha, on the contrary, is not a mythological, but a personal and historical character, and to think of a meeting of Buddha and Odin, or even of their respective descendants, at the roots of Mount Caucasus, would be like imagining an interview between Cyrus and Odin, between Mohammed and Aphrodite.

A comparative study of ancient religions and mythologies, as will be seen from these instances, is not a subject to be taken up lightly. It requires not only an accurate acquaintance with the minutest details of comparative philology, but a knowledge of the history of religions

[1] Grimm, l. c. p. 148.

which can hardly be gained without a study of original documents. As long, however, as researches of this kind are carried on for their own sake, and from a mere desire of discovering truth, without any ulterior objects, they deserve no blame, though, for a time, they may lead to erroneous results. But when coincidences between different religions and mythologies are searched out simply in support of preconceived theories, whether by the friends or enemies of religion, the sense of truth, the very life of all science, is sacrified, and serious mischief will follow without fail. Here we have a right, not only to protest, but to blame. There is on this account a great difference between the books we have hitherto examined, and a work lately published in Paris by M. Jacolliot, under the sensational title of '*La Bible dans l'Inde, Vie de Jeseus Christna.*' If this book had been written with the pure enthusiasm of Lieutenant Wilford, it might have been passed by as a mere anachronism. But when one sees how its author shuts his eyes against all evidence that would tell against him, and brings together, without any critical scruples, whatever seems to support his theory that Christianity is a mere

copy of the ancient religion of India, mere silence would not be a sufficient answer. Besides, the book has lately been translated into English, and will be read, no doubt, by many people who cannot test the evidence on which it professes to be founded. We learn that M. Jacolliot was some years ago appointed President of the Court of Justice at Chandernagore, and that he devoted the leisure left him from the duties of his position to studying Sanskrit and the holy books of the Hindus. He is said to have put himself in communication with the Brahmans, who had obtained access to a great number of MSS. carefully stored up in the depths of the pagodas. 'The purport of his book is' (I quote from a friendly critic), 'that our civilization, our religion, our legends, our gods, have come to us from India, after passing in succession through Egypt, Persia, Judæa, Greece, and Italy.' This statement, we are told, is not confined to M. Jacolliot, but has been admitted by almost all Oriental scholars. The Old and New Testaments are found again in the Vedas, and the texts quoted by M. Jacolliot in support of his theory are said to leave it without doubt. Brahma created

Adima (in Sanskrit, the first man) and gave him for companion Heva (in Sanskrit, that which completes life). He appointed the island of Ceylon for their residence. What follows afterwards is so beautifully described that I may be pardoned for quoting it. Only I must warn my readers, lest the extract should leave too deep an impression on their memory, that what M. Jacolliot calls a simple translation from Sanskrit is, as far as I can judge, a simple invention of some slightly mischievous Brahman, who, like the Pandits of Lieutenant Wilford, took advantage of the zeal and credulity of a French judge :—

'Having created the Man and the Woman (*simultaneously*, not one after the other), and animated them with the divine afflatus—the Lord said unto them : "Behold, your mission is to people this beautiful Island [Ceylon], where I have gathered together everything pleasant and needful for your subsistence,—the rest of the Earth is as yet uninhabitable, but should your progeny so increase as to render the bounds of paradise too narrow a habitation, let them inquire of me by sacrifice and I will make known my will."

'And thus saying, disappeared. . . .

'Then Adam and Eve dwelt together for a time in perfect happiness; but ere long a vague disquietude began to creep upon them. . . . The Spirit of Evil, jealous of their felicity and of the work of Brahma, inspired them with disturbing thoughts;—"Let us wander through the Island," said Adam to his companion, "and see if we may not find some part even more beautiful than this." . . .

'And Eve followed her husband . . wandering for days and for months; . . . but as they advanced the woman was seized with strange and inexplicable terrors: "Adam," said she, "let us go no farther, it seems to me that we are disobeying the Lord; have we not already quitted the place which he assigned us for a dwelling and forbade us to leave?"

'"Fear not," replied Adam, "this is not that fearful wilderness of which he spake to us." . . .

'And they wandered on. . . .

'Arriving at last at the extremity of the Island, they beheld a smooth and narrow arm of the sea, and beyond it a vast and apparently boundless country, connected with their Island only by a narrow and rocky pathway arising from the bosom of the waters.

'The two wanderers stood amazed: the country before them was covered with stately trees, birds of a thousand colours flitting amidst their foliage.

'. . . "Behold, what beautiful things!" cried Adam, "and what good fruit such trees must produce; . . . let us go and taste them, and if that country is better than this, we will dwell there."

'Eve, trembling, besought Adam to do nothing that might irritate the Lord against them. "Are we not well here? Have we not pure water and delicious fruits? Wherefore seek other things?"

'"True," replied Adam, "but we will return; what harm can it be to visit this unknown country that presents itself to our view?" . . . . And as he approached the rocks, Eve, trembling, followed.

'Placing his wife upon his shoulders, he proceeded to cross the space that separated him from the object of his desires, but no sooner did he touch the shore, than trees, flowers, fruits, birds, all that they had perceived from the opposite side, in an instant vanished amidst terrific clamor; . . . the rocks

by which they had crossed sunk beneath the waters, a few sharp peaks alone remaining above the surface, to indicate the place of the bridge which had been destroyed by Divine displeasure.

'The vegetation which they had seen from the opposite shore was but a delusive mirage raised by the Spirit of Evil to tempt them to disobedience.

'Adam fell, weeping, upon the naked sands, . . . but Eve throwing herself into his arms, besought him not to despair, . . . "let us rather pray to the Author of all things to pardon us." . . .

'And as she spake there came a voice from the clouds, saying,

'"Woman! *thou* hast only sinned from love to thy husband, whom I commanded thee to love, and thou hast hoped in me.

'"I therefore pardon thee—and I pardon him also for *thy* sake: . . . but ye may no more return to paradise which I had created for your happiness: . . . through your disobedience to my commands the Spirit of Evil has obtained possession of the Earth. . . . Your children reduced to labour and to suffer by your fault will become corrupt and forget me. . . .

'"But I will send Vishnu, who will be born of a woman, and who will bring to all the hope of a reward in another life, and the means by prayer of softening their sufferings."'

The translator from whom I have quoted exclaims at the end, as well he might:—

'What grandeur and what simplicity is this Hindu legend! and at the same time how simply logical! . . . Behold here the veritable Eve—the true woman.'

But much more extraordinary things are quoted by M. Jacolliot, from the Vedas and the commentaries.

On p. 63 we read that Manu, Minos, and Manes, had the same name as Moses; on p. 73, the Brahmans, who invaded India, are represented as the successors of a great reformer called Christna. The name of Zoroaster is derived from the Sanskrit Sûryastara (p. 110), meaning 'he who spreads the worship of the Sun.' After it has been laid down (p. 116) that Hebrew was derived from Sanskrit, we are assured that there is little difficulty in deriving Jehovah from Zeus[1]. Zeus,

[1] P. 125. 'Pour quiconque s'est occupé d'études philologiques, Jéhova dérivé de Zeus est facile à admettre.'

Jezeus, Jesus, and Isis are all declared to be the same name, and later on (p. 130) we learn that 'at present the Brahmans who officiate in the pagodas and temples give this title of Jeseus, i. e. the pure essence, the divine emanation, to Christna only, who alone is recognised as the Word, the truly incarnated, by the worshippers of Vishnu and the free thinkers among the Brahmans.'

We are assured that the Apostles, the poor fishermen of Galilee, were able to read the Veda (p. 356); and it was their greatest merit that they did not reject the miraculous accounts of the Vedic period, because the world was not yet ripe for freedom of thought. Kristna, or Christna, we read on p. 360, signified in Sanskrit, sent by God, promised by God, holy; and as the name of Christ or *Christos* is not Hebrew, whence could it have been taken except from Krishna, the son of Devakī, or, as M. Jacolliot writes, Devanaguy?

It is difficult, nay, almost impossible, to criticise or refute such statements, and yet it is necessary to do so; for such is the interest, or I should rather say the feverish curiosity, excited by anything that bears on ancient re-

ligion, that M. Jacolliot's book has produced a very wide and very deep impression. It has been remarked with some surprise that Vedic scholars in Europe had failed to discover these important passages in the Veda which he has pointed out, or, still worse, that they had never brought them to the knowledge of the public. In fact, if anything was wanting to show that a general knowledge of the history of ancient religion ought to form part of our education, it was the panic created by M. Jacolliot's book. It is simply the story of Lieutenant Wilford over again, only far less excusable now than a hundred years ago. Many of the words which M. Jacolliot quotes as Sanskrit are not Sanskrit at all; others never have the meaning which he assigns to them; and as to the passages from the Vedas (including our old friend the Bhagaveda-gîta), they are not from the Veda, they are not from any old Sanskrit writer,— they simply belong to the second half of the nineteenth century. What happened to Lieutenant Wilford has happened again to M. Jacolliot. He tells us the secret himself:—

'One day,' he says (p. 280), 'when we were

reading the translation of Manu, by Sir W. Jones, a note led us to consult the Indian commentator, Kullûka Bha*tt*a, when we found an allusion to the sacrifice of a son by his father prevented by God himself after he had commanded it. We then had only one *idée fixe*, namely, to find again in the dark mass of the religious books of the Hindus, the original account of that event. We should never have succeeded but for "the complaisance" of a Brahman with whom we were reading Sanskrit, and who, yielding to our request, brought us from the library of his pagoda the works of the theologian Ramatsariar, which have yielded us such precious assistance in this volume.'

As to the story of the son offered as a sacrifice by his father, and released at the command of the gods, M. Jacolliot might have found the original account of it from the Veda, both text and translation, in my History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature. He would soon have seen that the story of *S*una*hs*epa, being sold by his father in order to be sacrificed in the place of an Indian prince, has very little in common with the intended sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. M. Jacolliot has, no doubt, found out by

this time that he has been imposed upon; and if so, he ought to follow the example of Colonel Wilford, and publicly state what has happened. Even then, I doubt not that his statements will continue to be quoted for a long time, and that *Adima* and *Heva*, thus brought to life again, will make their appearance in many a book and many a lecture-room.

Lest it be supposed that such accidents happen to Sanskrit scholars only, or that this fever is bred only in the jungles of Indian mythology, I shall mention at least one other case, which will show that this disease is of a more general character, and that want of caution will produce it in every climate.

Before the discovery of Sanskrit, China had stood for a long time in the place which was afterwards occupied by India. When the ancient literature and civilization of China became first known to the scholars of Europe, the Celestial Empire had its admirers and prophets as full of enthusiasm as Sir W. Jones and Lieutenant Wilford, and there was nothing, whether Greek philosophy or Christian morality, that was not supposed to have had its first origin among the sages of China. The proceedings

of the Jesuit missionaries in China were most extraordinary. They had themselves admitted the antiquity of the writings of Confucius and Lao-tse, both of whom lived in the sixth century B. C[1]. But in their zeal to show that the sacred books of the Chinese contained numerous passages borrowed from the Bible, nay, even some of the dogmas of the later church, they hardly perceived that, taking into account the respective dates of these books, they were really proving that a kind of anticipated Christianity had been accorded to the ancient sages of the Celestial Empire. The most learned advocate of this school was Father Prémare. Another supporter of the same view, Montucci[2], speaking of Lao-tse's Tao-te-king, says :—

'We find in it so many sayings clearly referring to the triune God, that no one who has read this book can doubt that the mystery of the holiest Trinity was revealed to the Chinese more than five centuries before the advent of Christ. Everybody, therefore, who

[1] Stanislas Julien, Le Livre de la Voie et de la Vertu. Paris, 1842, p. iv.

[2] Montucci, De studiis sinicis. Berolini, 1808.

knows the strong feeling of the Chinese for their own teachers, will admit that nothing more efficient could be found in order to fix the dogmas of the Christian religion in the mind of the Chinese than the demonstration that these dogmas agree with their own books. The study, therefore, and the translation of this singular book (the Tao-te-king) would prove most useful to the missionaries, in order to bring to a happy issue the desired gathering in of the Apostolic harvest.'

What followed is so extraordinary that, though it has often been related, it deserves to be related again, more particularly as the whole problem which was supposed to have been solved once for all by M. Stanislas Julien, has of late been opened again by Dr. von Strauss, in the Journal of the German Oriental Society, 1869.

There is a passage at the beginning of the fourteenth chapter of the Tao-te-king in which Father Amyot felt certain that the three persons of the Trinity could be recognised. He translated it:—

'He who is as it were visible but cannot be seen is called *Khi*.

'He whom we cannot hear, and who does not speak to our ear, is called *Hi*.

'He who is as it were tangible, but cannot be touched, is called *Wei*.'

Few readers, I believe, would have been much startled by this passage, or would have seen in it what Father Amyot saw. But more startling revelations were in store. The most celebrated Chinese scholar of his time, Abel Rémusat, took up the subject; and after showing that the first of the three names had to be pronounced, not Khi, but I, he maintained that the three syllables, I Hi Wei, were meant for *Je-ho-vah*. According to him, the three characters employed in this name have no meaning in Chinese; they are only signs of sounds foreign to the Chinese language; and they were intended to render the Greek Ἰαώ, the name which, according to Diodorus Siculus, the Jews gave to their God. Rémusat goes on to remark that Lao-tse had really rendered this Hebrew name more accurately than the Greeks, because he had preserved the aspiration of the second syllable which was lost in Greek. In fact, he entertained no doubt that this word, occurring in the work of

Lao-tse, proves an intellectual communication between the West and China, in the sixth century B.C.

Fortunately, the panic created by this discovery did not last long. M. Stanislas Julien published in 1842 a complete translation of this difficult book; and here all traces of the name of Jehovah have disappeared.

'The three syllables,' he writes, 'which Abel Rémusat considered as purely phonetic and foreign to the Chinese language, have a very clear and intelligible meaning, and have been fully explained by Chinese commentators. The first syllable, I, means without colour; the second, Hi, without sound or voice; the third, Wei, without body. The proper translation therefore is:—

'You look (for the Tao, the law) and you see it not: it is colourless.

'You listen and you hear it not: it is voiceless.

'You wish to touch it and you reach it not: it is without body.'

Until, therefore, some other traces can be discovered in Chinese literature, proving an intercourse between China and Judæa in the

sixth century B.C., we can hardly be called upon to believe that the Jews should have communicated this one name, which they hardly trusted themselves to pronounce at home, to a Chinese philosopher; and we must treat the apparent similarity between I-Hi-Wei, and Jehovah, as an accident, which ought to serve as a useful warning, though it need in no way discourage a careful and honest study of Comparative Theology.

ON THE

PHILOSOPHY OF MYTHOLOGY.

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION IN 1871.

WHAT can be in our days the interest of mythology? What is it to us that Kronos was the son of Uranos and Gaia, and that he swallowed his children, Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Pluton, and Poseidon, as soon as they were born? What have we to do with the stories of Rhea, the wife of Kronos, who, in order to save her youngest son from being swallowed by his father, gave her husband a stone to swallow instead? And why should we be asked to admire the exploits of this youngest son, who, when he had grown up, made his father drink a draught, and thus helped to deliver the stone and his five brothers

and sisters from their paternal prison? What shall we think if we read in the most admired of classic poets that these escaped prisoners became afterwards the great gods of Greece, gods believed in by Homer, worshipped by Sokrates, immortalised by Pheidias? Why should we listen to such horrors as that Tantalos killed his own son, boiled him, and placed him before the gods to eat? or that the gods collected his limbs, threw them into a caldron, and thus restored Pelops to life, *minus*, however, his shoulder, which Demeter had eaten in a fit of absence, and which had therefore to be replaced by a shoulder made of ivory?

Can we imagine anything more silly, more savage, more senseless, anything more unworthy to engage our thoughts, even for a single moment? We may pity our children that, in order to know how to construe and understand the master-works of Homer and Virgil, they have to fill their memory with such idle tales; but we might justly suppose that men who have serious work to do in this world, would banish such subjects for ever from their thoughts.

And yet, how strange, from the very child-

hood of philosophy, from the first faintly-whispered Why? to our own time of matured thought and fearless inquiry, mythology has been the ever-recurrent subject of anxious wonder and careful study. The ancient philosophers, who could pass by the petrified shells on mountain-tops and the fossil trees buried in their quarries without ever asking the question how they came to be there, or what they signified, were ever ready with doubts and surmises when they came to listen to ancient stories of their gods and heroes. And, more curious still, even modern philosophers cannot resist the attraction of these ancient problems. That stream of philosophic thought which, springing from Descartes (1596–1650), rolled on through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in two beds — the *idealistic*, marked by the names of Malebranche (1638–1715), Spinoza (1632–1677), and Leibniz (1646–1716); and the *sensualistic*, marked by the names of Locke (1632–1704), David Hume (1711–1776), and Condillac (1715–1780), till the two arms united again in Kant (1724–1804), and the full stream was carried on by Schelling (1775–1854), and Hegel (1770–1831),— this

stream of modern philosophic thought has ended where ancient philosophy began—in a Philosophy of Mythology, which, as you know, forms the most important part of Schelling's final system, of what he called himself his *Positive Philosophy*, given to the world after the death of that great thinker and poet, in the year 1854.

I do not mean to say that Schelling and Aristotle looked upon mythology in the same light, or that they found in it exactly the same problems; yet there is this common feature in all who have thought or written on mythology, that they look upon it as something which, whatever it may mean, does certainly not mean what it seems to mean; as something that requires an explanation, whether it be a system of religion, or a phase in the development of the human mind, or an inevitable catastrophe in the life of language.

According to some, mythology is history changed into fable; according to others, fable changed into history. Some discover in it the precepts of moral philosophy enunciated in the poetical language of antiquity; others see in it a picture of the great forms and

forces of nature, particularly the sun, the moon, and the stars, the changes of day and night, the succession of the seasons, the return of the years—all this reflected by the vivid imagination of ancient poets and sages. Epicharmos, for instance, the pupil of Pythagoras, declared that the gods of Greece were not what, from the poems of Homer, we might suppose them to be—personal beings, endowed with superhuman powers, but liable to many of the passions and frailties of human nature. He maintained that these gods were really the Wind, the Water, the Earth, the Sun, the Fire, and the Stars. Not long after his time, another philosopher, Empedokles, holding that the whole of nature consisted in the mixture and separation of the four elements, declared that Zeus was the element of Fire, Here the element of Air, Aidoneus or Pluton the element of Earth, and Nestis the element of Water. In fact, whatever the free thinkers of Greece discovered successively as the first principles of Being and Thought, whether the air of Anaximenes, or the fire of Herakleitos, or the Nous or Mind of Anaxagoras, was readily identified with Zeus and the other

divine persons of Olympian mythology. Metrodoros, the contemporary of Anaxagoras, went even further. While Anaxagoras would have been satisfied with looking upon Zeus as but another name of his Nous, the highest intellect, the mover, the disposer, the governor of all things, Metrodoros resolved not only the persons of Zeus, Here, and Athene, but likewise those of human kings and heroes—such as Agamemnon, Achilles, and Hektor—into various combinations and physical agencies, and treated the adventures ascribed to them as natural facts, hidden under a thin veil of allegory.

Sokrates, it is well known, looked upon such attempts at explaining all fables allegorically as too arduous and unprofitable; yet he, too, as well as Plato, pointed frequently to what they called the *hypónoia*, the under-current, or if I may say so, the under-meaning of ancient mythology.

Aristotle speaks more explicitly:—

'It has been handed down,' he says, 'by early and very ancient people, and left to those who came after, in the form of myths, that these (the first principles of the world) are the gods, and

that the divine embraces the whole of nature. The rest has been added mythically, in order to persuade the many, and in order to be used in support of laws and other interests. Thus they say that the gods have a human form, and that they are like to some of the other living beings, and other things consequent on this, and similar to what has been said. If one separated out of these fables, and took only that first point, viz., that they believed the first essences to be gods, one would think that it had been divinely said, and that while every art and every philosophy was probably invented ever so many times and lost again, these opinions had, like fragments of them, been preserved until now. So far only is the opinion of our fathers, and that received from our first ancestors, clear to us.'

I have quoted the opinions of these Greek philosophers, to which many more might have been added, partly in order to show how many of the most distinguished minds of ancient Greece agreed in demanding an interpretation, whether physical or metaphysical, of Greek mythology, partly in order to satisfy those classical scholars, who, forgetful of their own classics, forgetful of their own Plato and Aristotle, seem

to imagine that the idea of seeing in the gods and heroes of Greece anything beyond what they appear to be in the songs of Homer, was a mere fancy and invention of the students of Comparative Mythology.

There were, no doubt, Greeks, and eminent Greeks too, who took the legends of their gods and heroes in their literal sense. But what do these say of Homer and Hesiod? Xenophanes, the contemporary of Pythagoras, holds Homer and Hesiod responsible for the popular superstitions of Greece. In this he agrees with Herodotus, when he declares that these two poets made the theogony for the Greeks, and gave to the gods their names, and assigned to them their honours and their arts, and described their appearances. But he then continues in a very different strain from the pious historian[1]. 'Homer,' he says[2], 'and Hesiod ascribed to the

[1] Her. ii. 53, οὗτοι δέ εἰσι οἱ ποιήσαντες θεογονίην Ἕλλησι, καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσι τὰς ἐπωνυμίας δόντες καὶ τιμάς τε καὶ τέχνας διελόντες, καὶ εἴδεα αὐτῶν σημήναντες.

[2] Πάντα θεοῖς ἀνέθηκαν Ὅμηρός θ' Ἡσίοδός τε
ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποισι ὀνείδεα καὶ ψόγος ἐστίν.
ὡς πλεῖστ' ἐφθέγξαντο θεῶν ἀθεμίστια ἔργα,
κλέπτειν μοιχεύειν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεύειν.
Sext. Emp. adv. Math. 1,289; ix. 193.

gods whatever is disgraceful and scandalous among men, yea, they declared that the gods had committed nearly all unlawful acts, such as theft, adultery, and fraud.' 'Men seem to have created their gods, and to have given to them their own mind, voice, and figure. The Ethiopians made their gods black and flat-nosed; the Thracians red-haired and blue-eyed; just as oxen and lions.' This was spoken about 500 B.C. Herakleitos, about 460 B.C., one of the boldest thinkers of ancient Greece, declared that Homer deserved to be ejected from public assemblies and flogged; and a story is told that Pythagoras (about 540 B.C.) saw the soul of Homer in Hades, hanging on a tree and surrounded by serpents, as a punishment for what he had said

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δοκέουσι θεοὺς γεγενῆσθαι
τὴν σφετέρην τ' αἴσθησιν ἔχειν φωνήν τε δέμας τε.—
Ἀλλ' εἴτοι χεῖράς γ' εἶχον βόες ἠὲ λέοντες
ἢ γράψαι χείρεσσι καὶ ἔργα τελεῖν ἅπερ ἄνδρες,
καί κε θεῶν ἰδέας ἔγραφον καὶ σώματ' ἐποίουν
τοιαῦθ' οἷόν περ καὐτοὶ δέμας εἶχον ὁμοῖον,
ἵπποι μέν θ' ἵπποισι, βόες δέ τε βουσὶν ὁμοῖα.

Clem. Alex. Strom. v. p. 601, c.

Ὡς φησιν Ξενοφάνης· Αἰθίοπές τε μέλανας σιμούς τε, Θρᾷκές τε πυρροὺς καὶ γλαυκούς.'—Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. p. 711, B. Historia Philosophiæ, ed. Ritter et Preller, cap. iii.

of the gods. And what can be stronger than the condemnation passed on Homer by Plato? I shall read an extract from the 'Republic,' from the excellent translation lately published by Professor Jowett:—

'But what fault do you find with Homer and Hesiod, and the other great story-tellers of mankind?'

'A fault which is most serious,' I said: 'the fault of telling a lie, and a bad lie.'

'But when is this fault committed?'

'Whenever an erroneous misrepresentation is made of the nature of gods and heroes—like the drawing of a limner which has not the shadow of a likeness to the truth.'

'"Yes," he said, "that sort of thing is certainly very blameable; but what are the stories which you mean?"

'"First of all," I said, "there was that greatest of all lies in high places, which the poet told about Uranos, and which was an immoral lie too—I mean what Hesiod says that Uranos did, and what Kronos did to him. The fact is that the doings of Kronos, and the sufferings which his son inflicted upon him, even if they were true, ought not to be lightly

told to young and simple persons; if possible, they had better be buried in silence. But if there is an absolute necessity for their mention, a very few might hear them in a mystery, and then let them sacrifice not a common (Eleusinian) pig, but some huge and unprocurable victim; this would have the effect of very greatly reducing the number of the hearers."

'"Why, yes," said he, "these stories are certainly objectionable."

'"Yes, Adeimantos, they are stories not to be narrated in our State; the young man should not be told that in committing the worst of crimes he is far from doing anything outrageous, and that he may chastise his father when he does wrong in any manner that he likes, and in this will only be following the example of the first and greatest of the gods."

'"I quite agree with you," he said; "in my opinion those stories are *not fit to be repeated.*"

'"Neither, if we mean our future guardians to regard the habit of quarrelling as dishonourable, should anything be said of the wars in heaven, and of the plots and fightings of the gods against one another, which are quite untrue. Far be it from us to tell them of the

battles of the giants, and embroider them on garments; or of all the innumerable other quarrels of gods and heroes with their friends and relations. If they would only believe us, we would tell them that quarrelling is unholy, and that never up to this time has there been any quarrel between citizens; this is what old men and old women should begin by telling children, and the same when they grow up. And these are the sort of fictions which the poets should be required to compose. But the narrative of Hephaestos binding Here his mother, or how on another occasion Zeus sent him flying for taking her part when she was being beaten—such tales must not be admitted into our State, whether they are supposed to have an allegorical meaning or not. For the young man cannot judge what is allegorical and what is literal, and anything that he receives into his mind at that age is apt to become indelible and unalterable; and therefore the tales which they first hear should be models of virtuous thoughts."'

To those who look upon mythology as an ancient form of religion, such freedom of language as is here used by Xenophanes and

Plato, must seem startling. If the Iliad were really the Bible of the Greeks, as it has not unfrequently been called, such violent invectives would have been impossible. For let us bear in mind that Xenophanes, though he boldly denied the existence of all the mythological deities, and declared his belief in One God, 'neither in form nor in thought like unto mortals[1],' was not therefore considered a heretic. He never suffered for uttering his honest convictions: on the contrary, as far as we know, he was honoured by the people among whom he lived and taught. Nor was Plato ever punished on account of his unbelief, and though he, as well as his master, Sokrates, became obnoxious to the dominant party at Athens, this was due to political far more than to theological motives. At all events, Plato, the pupil, the friend, the apologist of Sokrates, was allowed to teach at Athens to the end of his life, and few men commanded greater respect in all ranks of Greek society.

But, although mythology was not religion

[1] Εἷς θεὸς ἔν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος,
οὔ τι δέμας θνητοῖσι ὁμοίος οὐδὲ νόημα.
Clem. Alex. Strom. v. p. 601, c.

in our sense of the word, and although the Iliad certainly never enjoyed among Greeks the authority either of the Bible, or even of the Veda among the Brahmans, or the Zend Avesta among the Parsis, yet I would not deny altogether that in a certain sense the mythology of the Greeks belonged to their religion. We must only be on our guard, here as everywhere else, against the misleading influence of words. The word Religion has, like most words, had its history; it has grown and changed with each century, and it cannot therefore have meant with the Greeks and Brahmans what it meant with us. Religions have sometimes been divided into *national* or *traditional*, as distinguished from *individual* or *statutable* religion. The former are, like languages, home-grown, autochthonic, without an historical beginning, generally without any recognised founder, or even an authorised code; the latter have been founded by historical persons, generally in antagonism to traditional systems, and they always rest on the authority of a written code. I do not consider this division as very useful[1] for a scientific

[1] See p. 139.

study of religion, because in many cases it is extremely difficult, and sometimes impossible, to draw a sharp line of demarcation, and to determine whether a given religion may be considered as the work of one man, or as the combined work of those who came before him, who lived with him, nay, even of those who came after him. For our present purpose, however, for showing at once the salient difference between what the Greeks and what we ourselves should mean by Religion, this division is very serviceable. The Greek religion was clearly a national and traditional religion, and, as such, it shared both the advantages and disadvantages of this form of religious belief; the Christian religion is an historical, and to a great extent, an individual religion, and it possesses the advantage of an authorised code and of a settled system of faith. Let it not be supposed, however, that between traditional and individual religions the advantages are all on one, the disadvantages on the other side. As long as the immemorial religions of the different branches of the human race remained in their natural state, and were not pressed into the service of political parties or

an ambitious priesthood, they allowed great freedom of thought and a healthy growth of real piety, and they were seldom disgraced by an intolerant or persecuting spirit. They were generally either honestly believed, or, as we have just seen, honestly attacked, and a high tone of intellectual morality was preserved, untainted by hypocrisy, equivocation, or unreasoning dogmatism. The marvellous development of philosophy in Greece, particularly in ancient Greece, was chiefly due, I believe, to the absence of an established religion and an influential priesthood; and it is impossible to overrate the blessing which the fresh, pure, invigorating, and elevating air of that ancient Greek philosophy has conferred on all ages, not excepting our own. I shudder at the thought of what the world would have been without Plato and Aristotle, and I tremble at the idea that the youth of the future should ever be deprived of the teaching and the example of these true prophets of the absolute freedom of thought. Unfortunately we know but little of the earliest fathers of Greek philosophy; we have but fragments, and those not always trustworthy, nor easily intelligible,

of what they taught on the highest questions that can stir the heart of man. We have been accustomed to call the oracular sayings of men like Thales, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, or Herakleitos, philosophy, but there was in them as much of religion as in the songs of Homer and Hesiod. Homer and Hesiod were great powers, but their poems were not the only feeders of the religious life of Greece. The stream of ancient wisdom and philosophy flowed parallel with the stream of legend and poetry; and both were meant to support the religious cravings of the soul. We have only to attend without prejudice to the utterances of these ancient prophets, such as Xenophanes and Herakleitos, in order to convince ourselves that these men spoke with authority to the people [1], that they considered themselves the equals of Homer and Hesiod, nay, their betters, and in no way fettered by the popular legends about gods and goddesses. While

[1] Empedokles, Carmina, v. 411 (Fragm. Philos. Græc. vol. i. p. 12).

ὦ φίλοι, οἶδα μὲν οὖν ὅτ' ἀληθείη παρὰ μύθοις
οὓς ἐγὼ ἐξερέω· μάλα δ' ἀργαλέη γε τέτυκται
ἀνδράσι καὶ δύσζηλος ἐπὶ φρένα πίστιος ὁρμή.

modern religions assume in general a hostile attitude towards philosophy, ancient religions have either included philosophy as an integral part, or they have at least tolerated its growth in the very precincts of their temples.

After we have thus seen what limitations we must place on the meaning of the word Religion, if we call mythology the religion of the ancient world, we may now advance another step.

We have glanced at the principal interpretations which have been proposed by the ancients themselves of the original purpose and meaning of mythology. But there is one question which none, either of the ancient or of the modern interpreters of mythology, has answered, or even asked, and on which, nevertheless, the whole problem of mythology seems to turn. If mythology is history changed into fable, why was it so changed? If it is fable represented as history, why were such fables invented? If it contains precepts of moral philosophy, whence their immoral disguise? If it is a picture of the great forms and forces of nature, the same question still returns, why were these forms and forces represented as

heroes and heroines, as nymphs and shepherds, as gods and goddesses? It is easy enough to call the sun a god, or the dawn a goddess, after these predicates have once been framed. But how were these predicates framed? How did people come to know of gods and goddesses, heroes and nymphs, and what meaning did they originally connect with these terms? In fact, the real question which a philosophy of mythology has to answer is this,—Is the whole of mythology an invention, the fanciful poetry of a Homer or Hesiod, or is it a growth? Or, to speak more definitely, Was mythology a mere accident, or was it inevitable? Was it only a false step, or was it a step that could not have been left out in the historical progress of the human mind?

The study of the history of language, which is only a part of the study of the history of thought, has enabled us to give a decisive answer to this question. Mythology is inevitable, it is natural, it is an inherent necessity of language, if we recognise in language the outward form and manifestation of thought: it is in fact the dark shadow which language throws on thought, and which can never disappear

till language becomes altogether commensurate with thought, which it never will. Mythology, no doubt, breaks out more fiercely during the early periods of the history of human thought, but it never disappears altogether. Depend upon it, there is mythology now as there was in the time of Homer, only we do not perceive it, because we ourselves live in the very shadow of it, and because we all shrink from the full meridian light and truth. We are ready enough to see that if the ancients called their kings and heroes Διογενεῖς, sprung of Zeus, that expression, intended originally to convey the highest praise which man can bestow on man, was apt to lapse into mythology. We easily perceive how such a conception, compatible in its origin with the highest reverence for the gods, led almost inevitably to the growth of fables, which transferred to divine beings the incidents of human paternity and sonship. But we are not so ready to see that it is our fate, too, to move in allegories which illustrate things intellectual by visions exhibited to the fancy. In our religion, too, the conceptions of paternity and sonship have not always been free from all

that is human, nor are we always aware that nearly every note that belongs to human paternity and sonship must be taken out of these terms, before they can be pronounced safe against mythological infection. Papal decisions on immaculate conception are of no avail against that mythology. The mind must become immaculate and rise superior to itself: or it must close its eyes and shut its lips in the presence of the Divine.

If then we want to understand mythology, in the ordinary and restricted sense of the word, we must discover the larger circle of mental phenomena to which it belongs. Greek mythology is but a small segment of mythology; the religious mythologies of all the races of mankind are again but a small segment of mythology. Mythology, in the highest sense, is the power exercised by language on thought in every possible sphere of mental activity; and I do not hesitate to call the whole history of philosophy, from Thales down to Hegel, an uninterrupted battle against mythology, a constant protest of thought against language. This will require some explanation.

Ever since the time of Wilhelm von Hum-

boldt, all who have seriously grappled with the highest problems of the Science of Language, have come to the conviction that thought and language are inseparable, that language is as impossible without thought as thought is without language; that they stand to each other like soul and body, like power and function, like substance and form. The objections which have been raised against this view arise generally from a mere misunderstanding. If we speak of language as the outward realisation of thought, we do not mean language as deposited in a dictionary, or sketched in a grammar, we mean language as an act, language as being spoken, language as living and dying with every word that is uttered. We might perhaps call this speech, as distinguished from language.

Secondly, though if we speak of language, we mean chiefly phonetic articulate language, we do not exclude the less perfect symbols of thought, such as gestures, signs, or pictures. They, too, are language in a certain sense, and they must be included in language before we are justified in saying that discursive thought can be realised in language only. One in-

stance will make this clear. We hold that we cannot think without language. But can we not count without language? We certainly can. We can form the conception of *three* without any spoken word, by simply holding up three fingers. In the same manner, the hand might stand for five, both hands for ten, hands and feet for twenty[1]. This is how people who possessed no organs of speech would speak; this is how the deaf and dumb *do* speak. Three fingers are as good as three strokes, three strokes are as good as three clicks of the tongue, three clicks of the tongue are as good as the sound *three*, or *trois*, or *drei*, or *shalosh* in Hebrew, or *san* in Chinese. All these are signs, more or less perfect, but being signs, they fall under the category of language; and all we maintain is, that without some kind of sign, discursive thought is impossible, and that in that sense, language, or λόγος, is the only possible realisation of human thought.

Another very common misunderstanding is this: people imagine that, if it be impossible

[1] Daily Life and Origin of the Tasmanians, by J. Bonwick, 1870, p. 143.

to think, except in language, language and thought must be one and the same thing. But a true philosophy of language leads to the very opposite result. Every philosopher would say that substance cannot exist without form, nor form without substance, but no philosopher would say that therefore it is impossible to distinguish between form and substance. In the same way, though we maintain that thought cannot exist without language nor language without thought, we do distinguish between thought and language, between the inward and the outward λόγος, between the substance and the form. Nay, we go a step beyond. We admit that language necessarily reacts on thought, and we see in this reaction, in this refraction of the rays of language, the real solution of the old riddle of mythology.

You will now see why these somewhat abstruse disquisitions were necessary for our immediate purpose, and I can promise those who have hitherto followed me on this rather barren and rugged track, that they will now be able to rest, and command, from the point of view which we have reached, the whole panorama of the mythology of the human mind.

We saw just now that the names of numbers may most easily be replaced by signs. Numbers are simple analytical conceptions, and for that very reason they are not liable to mythology: name and conception being here commensurate, no misunderstanding is possible. But as soon as we leave this department of thought, mythology begins. I shall try by at least one example to show how mythology not only pervades the sphere of religion or religious tradition, but it infects more or less the whole realm of thought.

When man wished for the first time to grasp and express a distinction between the body, and something else within him distinct from the body, an easy name that suggested itself was *breath*. The breath seemed something immaterial and almost invisible, and it was connected with the life that pervaded the body, for as soon as the breath ceased, the life of the body became extinct. Hence the Greek name ψυχή[1], which originally meant breath,

[1] The word ψυχή is clearly connected in Greek with ψύχω, which meant originally blowing, and was used either in the sense of cooling by blowing, or breathing by blowing. In

was chosen to express at first the principle of life, as distinguished from the decaying

the former acceptation it produced ψύχος, coldness; ψυχρός, cold; ψυχάω, I cool; in the latter ψυχή, breath, then life, then soul. So far the purely Greek growth of words derived from ψύχω is clear. But ψύχω itself is difficult. It seems to point to a root *spu*, meaning to blow out, to spit; Lat. *spuo*, and *spuma*, foam; Goth. *spivan;* Gr. πτύω, supposed to stand for σπιύω. Hesychius mentions ψύττει=πτύει, ψυττόν =πτύελον. (Pott, Etym. Forsch. No. 355.) Curtius connects this root with Gr. φυ, in φῦσα, blowing, bellows, φυσάω, to blow, φυσιάω, to snort, ποι-φύσσω, to blow, and with Lat. *spirare* (i. e. spoisare). See E. B. Tylor, 'The Religion of Savages,' Fortnightly Review, 1866, p. 73.

Stahl, who rejected the division of life and mind adopted by Bacon, and returned to the Aristotelian doctrine, falls back on to Plato's etymology of ψυχή as φυσέχη, from φύσιν ἔχειν or ὀχεῖν, Crat. 400 B. In a passage of his Theoria Medica Vera (Halæ, 1708), pointed out to me by Dr. Rolleston, Stahl says:—'Invenio in lexico græco antiquiore post alios, et Budæum imprimis, iterum iterumque reviso, nomenclaturam nimis quam fugitive allegatam; φυσέχη, poetice, pro ψυχή. Incidit animo suspicari, an non verum primum nomen animæ antiquissimis Græcis fuerit hoc φυσέχη, quasi ἔχων τὸ φύειν, e cuius vocis pronunciatione deflectente, uti vere familiariter solet vocalium, inprimis sub accentibus, fugitiva enunciatione, sensim natum sit φυσ-χή φσυχή, denique ad faciliorem pronunciationem in locum φσυχή, ψυχή. Quam suspicionem fouere mihi videtur illud, quod vocabuli ψυχῆς, pro anima, nulla idonea analogia in lingua græca occurrat; nam quæ a ψύχω ducitur, cum verus huius et directus significatus notorie sit refrigero, indirectus autem magis, spiro, nihil certe hæc ad animam puto.' (p. 44.)

body, afterwards the incorporeal, the immaterial, the undecaying, the immortal part of man—his soul, his mind, his Self. All this was very natural. When a person dies, we too say that he has given up the ghost, and ghost, too, meant originally spirit, and spirit meant breath.

A very instructive analogous case is quoted by Mr. E. B. Tylor from a compendium of the theology of the Indians of Nicaragua, the record of question and answer in an inquest held by Father Francisco de Bobadilla in the early days of the Spanish conquest. Asked, among other things, concerning death, the Indians said: 'Those who die in their houses go underground, but those who are killed in war go to serve the gods (*teotes*). When men die, there comes forth from their mouth something which resembles a person, and is called *julio* (Aztec *yuli*, "to live"). This being is like a person, but does not die, and the corpse remains here.' The Spanish ecclesiastics inquired whether those who go on high, keep the same body, features, and limbs as here below; to which the Indians answered, 'No, there is only the heart.' 'But,' said the Spaniards,

'as the hearts are torn out' (they meant in the case of warriors who fell into the hands of the enemy) 'what happens then?' Hereupon the Indians replied: 'It is not precisely the heart, but that which is in them, and makes them live, and which quits the body when they die;' and again they said, 'It is not their heart which goes up on high, but that which makes them live, that is, the breath coming out from their mouth, which is called *julio*.' 'Then,' asked the Spaniards, 'does this heart, *julio* or soul, die with the body?' 'When the deceased has lived well,' replied the Indians, 'the *julio* goes up on high with our gods; but when he has lived ill, the *julio* perishes with the body, and there is an end of it.'

The Greeks expressed the same idea by saying that the ψυχή had left the body[1], had fled through the mouth, or even through a bleeding wound[2], and had gone into Hades,

[1] ἀνδρὸς δὲ ψυχὴ πάλιν ἐλθεῖν οὔτε λεϊστὴ,
οὔθ' ἑλετὴ, ἐπεὶ ἄρ κὲν ἀμείψεται ἕρκος ὀδόντων.
Il. ix. 408.

[2] διὰ δ' ἔντερα χαλκὸς ἄφυσσεν
δῃώσας· ψυχὴ δὲ κατ' οὐταμένην ὠτειλὴν
ἔσσυτ' ἐπειγομένη.
Il. xiv. 517.

which meant literally no more than the place of the Invisible (Ἀΐδης). That the breath had become invisible, was matter of fact; that it had gone to the house of Hades, was mythology springing spontaneously from the fertile soil of language.

The primitive mythology was by no means necessarily religious. In the very case which we have chosen, philosophical mythology sprang up by the side of religious mythology. The religious mythology consisted in speaking of the spirits of the departed as ghosts, as mere breath and air, as fluttering about the gates of Hades, or ferried across the Styx in the boat of Charon [1].

The philosophical mythology, however, that sprang from this name was much more important. We saw that *Psyche*, meaning originally the breathing of the body, was gradually used in the sense of vital breath, and as something independent of the body; and that at last, when it had assumed the meaning of the

[1] 'Ter frustra compressa manu effugit imago,
Par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno.'
Virg. Æn. ii. 792.

immortal part of man, it retained that character of something independent of the body, thus giving rise to the conception of a soul, not only as a being without a body, but in its very nature opposed to body. As soon as that opposition had been established in language and thought, philosophy began its work in order to explain how two such heterogeneous powers could act on each other — how the soul could influence the body, and how the body could determine the soul. Spiritualistic and materialistic system of philosophy arose, and all this in order to remove a self-created difficulty, in order to join together again what language had severed, the living body and the living soul. The question whether there is a soul or spirit, whether there is in man something different from the mere body, is not at all affected by this mythological phraseology. We certainly can distinguish between body and soul, but as long as we keep within the limits of human knowledge, we have no right to speak of the living soul as a breath, or of spirits and ghosts as fluttering about like birds or fairies. The poet of the nineteenth century says :—

'The spirit does but mean the breath,
I know no more.'

And the same thought was expressed by Cicero two thousand years ago: 'Whether the soul is air or fire, I do not know.' As men, we only know of embodied spirits, however ethereal their bodies may be conceived to be, but of spirits, separate from body, without form or frame, we know as little as we know of thought without language, or of the Dawn as a goddess, or of the Night as the mother of the Day.

Though breath, or spirit, or ghost are the most common names that were assigned through the metaphorical nature of language to the vital, and afterwards to the intellectual, principle in man, they were by no means the only possible names. We speak, for instance, of the *shades* of the departed, which meant originally their shadows. Those who first introduced this expression—and we find it in the most distant parts of the world[1]—evidently took the shadow as the nearest

[1] See E. B. Tylor, Fortnightly Review, 1866, p. 74.

approach to what they wished to express; something that should be incorporeal, yet closely connected with the body. The Greek εἴδωλον, too, is not much more than the shadow, while the Latin *manes* meant probably in the beginning no more than the Little Ones, the Small Folk[1]. But the curious part, as showing again the influence of language on thought, an influence more powerful even than the evidence of the senses, is this, that people who speak of the life or soul as the shadow of the body, have brought themselves to believe that a dead body casts no shadow, because the shadow has departed from it; that it becomes, in fact, a kind of Peter Schlemihl[2].

Let us now return to mythology in the narrower sense of the word. One of the earliest objects that would strike and stir the mind of man and for which a sign or a name would soon be wanted is surely the Sun. It is very

[1] *Im-manis*, originally 'not small,' came to mean enormous or monstrous. — See Preller, Römische Mythologie, p. 72 *seq.*

[2] Unkulunkulu; or the Tradition of Creation as existing among the Amazulu and other Tribes of South Africa; by the Rev. J. Callaway, M.D. Natal, 1868. Part I. p. 91.

hard for us to realise the feelings with which the first dwellers on the earth looked upon the sun, or to understand fully what they meant by a morning prayer, or a morning sacrifice. Perhaps there are few people here present who have watched a sunrise more than once or twice in their life; few people who have ever known the true meaning of a morning prayer, or a morning sacrifice. But think of man at the very dawn of time: forget for a moment, if you can, after having read the fascinating pages of Mr. Darwin, forget what man is supposed to have been before he was man; forget it, because it does not concern us here whether his bodily form and frame were developed once for all in the mind of a Creator, or gradually in the creation itself, which from the first monad or protoplasm to the last of the primates, or man, is not, I suppose, to be looked on, as altogether causeless, meaningless, purposeless; think of him only as man (and man means the thinker), with his mind yet lying fallow, though full of germs —germs of which I hold as strongly as ever no trace has ever, no trace will ever, be discovered anywhere but in man; think of the Sun

awakening the eyes of man from sleep, and his mind from slumber! Was not the Sunrise to him the first wonder, the first beginning of all reflection, all thought, all philosophy? was it not to him the first revelation, the first beginning of all trust, of all religion? To us that wonder of wonders has ceased to exist, and few men now would even venture to speak of the sun as Sir John Herschel has spoken, calling him 'the Almoner of the Almighty, the delegated dispenser to us of light and warmth, as well as the centre of attraction, and as such, the immediate source of all our comforts, and, indeed, of the very possibility of our existence on earth[1].'

Man is a creature of habit, and wherever we can watch him, we find that before a few generations have passed, he has lost the power of admiring what is regular, and that he can see signs and wonders only in what is irregular. Few nations only have preserved in their ancient poetry some remnants of the natural awe with which the earliest dwellers on the

[1] See J. Samuelson, Views of the Deity, Traditional and Scientific, p. 144. Williams and Norgate, 1871.

earth saw that brilliant being slowly rising from out the darkness of the night, raising itself by its own might higher and higher, till it stood triumphant on the arch of heaven, and then descended and sank down in its fiery glory into the dark abyss of the heaving and hissing sea. In the hymns of the Veda the poet still wonders whether the sun will rise again; he asks how he can climb the vault of heaven? why he does not fall back? why there is no dust on his path? And when the rays of the morning rouse him from sleep and call him back to new life; when he sees the sun, as he says, stretching out his golden arms to bless the world and rescue it from the terrors of darkness, he exclaims, 'Arise, our life, our spirit has come back! the darkness is gone, the light approaches!'

For so prominent an object in the primeval picture-gallery of the human mind, a sign or a name must have been wanted at a very early period. But how was this to be achieved? As a mere sign, a circle would have been sufficient, such as we find in the hieroglyphics of Egypt, in the graphic system of China, or even in our own astronomical tables. If such

a sign was fixed upon, we have a beginning of language in the widest sense of the word, for we have brought the Sun under the general concept of roundness, and we have found a sign for this concept which is made up of a large number of single sensuous impressions. With such definite signs mythology has little chance; yet the mere fact that the sun was represented as a circle would favour the idea that the sun was round; or, as ancient people, who had no adjective as yet for round or *rotundus*[1], would say, that the sun was a wheel, a *rota*. If, on the contrary, the round

[1] 'It has already been implied that the Aborigines of Tasmania had acquired very limited powers of abstraction or generalization. They possessed no words representing abstract ideas; for each variety of gum-tree and wattle-tree, &c., &c., they had a name, but they had no equivalent for the expression, "a tree;" neither could they express abstract qualities, such as hard, soft, warm, cold, long, short, round, &c.; for "hard" they would say "like a stone;" for "tall" they would say "long legs," &c.; for "round" they said "like a ball," "like the moon," and so on, usually suiting the action to the word, and confirming by some sign, the meaning to be understood.'—Milligan, Vocabulary of the Dialects of some of the Aboriginal Tribes of Tasmania, p. 34. Hobart Town, 1866.

sign reminded the people of an eye, then the sign of the sun would soon become the eye of heaven, and germs of mythology would spring up even from the barren soil of such hieroglyphic language.

But now, suppose that a real name was wanted for the sun, how could that be achieved?

We know that all words are derived from roots, that these roots express general concepts, and that, with few exceptions, every name is founded on a general concept under which the object that has to be named can be ranged. How these roots came to be, is a question into which we need not enter at present. Their origin and growth form a problem of psychology rather than of philology, and each science must keep within its proper bounds. If a name was wanted for snow, the early framers of language singled out one of the general predicates of snow, its whiteness, its coldness, or its liquidity, and called the snow the white, the cold, or the liquid, by means of roots conveying the general idea of whiteness, coldness, or liquidity.

Not only Nix, nivis, but Niobe[1] too, was a name of the snow, and meant the melting; the death of her beautiful children by the

[1] If Signor Ascoli blames me for deriving *Niobe* with other names for snow from the root *snu*, instead of from the root *snigh*, this can only be due to an oversight. I am responsible for the derivation of Niobe, and for the admission of a secondary root *snyu* or *nyu*, and so far I may be either right or wrong. But Signor Ascoli ought to have known that the derivation of Gothic *snáiv-s*, Old High-German *snêo*, or *snê*, gen. *snêwe-s*, Lithuanian *snéga-s*, Slav. *snjeg*, Hib. *sneachd*, from the root *snu*, rests on the authority of Bopp (Glossarium, 1847, s. v. snu; see also Grimm, Deutsche Grammatik, ii. p. 700). He ought likewise to have known that in 1852 Professor Schweizer-Siedler, in his review of Bötticher's Arica (Kuhn's Zeitschrift, i. p. 479) had pointed out that *snigh* may be considered as a secondary root by the side of *snu* and *snâ*; (cf. σμάω, σμήχω; ψάω, ψήχω; νάω, νήχω). The real relation of *snu* to *snigh* had been explained as early as 1842 by Benfey, Wurzellexicon, ii. p. 54; and Signor Ascoli was no doubt aware of what Professor Curtius had written on the relation of *snigh* to *snu* (Grundzüge der Griechischen Etymologie, p. 297). Signor Ascoli has certainly shown with greater minuteness than his predecessors that not only Zend *snizh* and Lithuanian *snêga-s*, but likewise Gothic *snaiv-s*, Greek νίφει, Latin nix, nĭv-is, and ninguis, may be derived from *snigh*; but if from *snigh*, a secondary development of the root *snu*, we can arrive at *νίφ-α*, and at *νίβα*, the other steps that lead on to Niobe will remain just the same.

arrows of Apollon and Artemis represents the destruction of winter by the rays of the sun. If the sun itself was to be named, it might be called the brilliant, the awakener, the runner, the ruler, the father, the giver of warmth, of fertility, of life, the scorcher, the destroyer, the messenger of death, and many other names; but there was no possibility of naming it, except by laying hold of one of its characteristic features, and expressing that feature by means of one of the conceptual or predicative roots.

Let us trace the history of at least one of these names. Before the Aryan nations separated, before there was a Latin, a Greek, or a Sanskrit language, there existed a root *svar* or *sval*, which meant to beam, to glitter, to warm. It exists in Greek, σέλας, splendour; σελήνη, moon; in Anglo-Saxon, as *swélan*, to burn, to sweal; in modern German, *schwül*, oppressively hot. From it we have in Sanskrit the noun *svar*, meaning sometimes the sky, sometimes the sun; and exactly the same word has been preserved in Latin, as *sol;* in Gothic, as *sauil;* in Anglo-Saxon, as *sol*. A secondary form of *svar* is the Sanskrit *súrya* for *svârya*,

the sun, which is the same word as the Greek ἥλιος.

All these names were originally mere predicates; they meant bright, brilliant, warm. But as soon as the name *svar* or *súrya* was formed, it became, through the irresistible influence of language, the name, not only of a living, but of a male being. Every noun in Sanskrit must be either a masculine or a feminine (for the neuter gender was originally confined to the nominative case), and as *súryas* had been formed as a masculine, language stamped it once for all as the sign of a male being, as much as if it had been the name of a warrior or a king. In other languages where the name for sun is a feminine, and the sun is accordingly conceived as a woman, as a queen, as the bride of the moon, the whole mythology of the love-making of the heavenly bodies is changed.

You may say that all this shows, not so much the influence of language on thought, as of thought on language; and that the sexual character of all words reflects only the peculiarities of a child's mind, which can conceive of nothing except as living, as male or female. If a child hurts itself against a chair, it beats and scolds

the chair. The chair is looked upon not as *it*, but as *he;* it is the naughty chair, quite as much as a boy is a naughty boy. There is some truth in this, but it only serves to confirm the right view of the influence of language on thought; for this tendency, though in its origin intentional, and therefore the result of thought, became soon a mere rule of tradition in language, and it then reacted on the mind with irresistible power. As soon, in fact, as *sûryas* or ἥλιος appears as a masculine, we are in the very thick of mythology. We have not yet arrived at Helios as a god—that is a much later stage of thought, which we might describe almost in the words of Plato at the beginning of the seventh book of the Republic, 'And after this, he will reason that the sun is he who gives the seasons and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold.' We have not yet advanced so far, but we have reached at least the first germs of a myth. In the Homeric hymn to Helios, Helios is not yet called an immortal, but only ἐπιείκελος ἀθανάτοισι, like unto immortals, yet he is called the child of

Euryphaessa, the son of Hyperion, the grandson of Uranos and Gaea [1].

All this is mythology; it is ancient language going beyond its first intention.

Nor is there much difficulty in interpreting this myth. Helios, the sun, is called the son of Hyperīon, sometimes Hyperīon himself. This name Hyperion is derived from the preposition ὑπέρ, the Latin *super*, which means above. It it derived by means of the suffix -ιων, which originally was not a patronymic, but simply expressed belonging to. So if Helios was called Hyperion, this simply meant he who dwells on high, and corresponds to Latin *Summanus* or *Superior*, or *Excelsior*. If, on the contrary, Helios is called Hyperionides, this, too, which meant originally no more than he who comes from, or belongs to those who dwell on high [2],

[1] At the end of the hymn the poet says:—

χαῖρε, ἄναξ, πρόφρων δὲ βίον θυμήρε' ὄπαζε·
ἐκ σέο δ' ἀρξάμενος κλήσω μερόπων γένος ἀνδρῶν
ἡμιθέων, ὧν ἔργα θεοὶ θνητοῖσιν ἔδειξαν.

This would seem to imply that the poet looked upon Helios as a half-god, almost as a hero, who had once lived on earth.

[2] Corssen, Ueber Steigerungsendungen, Kuhn's Zeitschrift, iii. p. 299.

led to the myth that he was the descendant of Hyperion; so that in this case, as in the case of Zeus Kronīon, the son really led to the conception of his father. Zeus Kronīon meant originally no more than Zeus the eternal, the god of ages, the ancient of days; but *-ίων* becoming usual as a patronymic suffix, Kronion was supposed to mean the son of Kronos. Kronos, the father, was created in order to account for the existence of the name Kronion. If Hyperīon is called the son of Euryphaessa, the wide-shining, this requires no commentary; for even at present a poet might say that the sun is born of the wide-shining dawn. You see the spontaneous generation of mythology with every new name that is formed. As not only the sun, but also the moon and the dawn could be called dwellers on high, they, too, took the name of Hyperionis or Hyperionides; and hence Homer called Selene, the Moon, and Eos, the Dawn, sisters of Helios, and daughters of Hyperion and Euryphaessa, the Dawn doing service twice, both as mother, Euryphaessa, and as daughter, Eos. Nay, according to Homer, Euryphaessa, the Dawn, is not only the wife, but also the sister of Helios. All this is perfectly

intelligible, if we watch the growth of language and mythology; but it leads, of course, to the most tragic catastrophes as soon as it is all taken in a literal sense.

Helios is called ἀκάμας, the never-tiring; πανδερκής, the all-seeing; φαέθων, the shining; and also φοῖβος, the brilliant. This last epithet φοῖβος has grown into an independent deity Phoebus, and it is particularly known as a name of Apollon, Phoibos Apollon; thus showing what is also known from other sources that in Apollo, too, we have one of the many mythic disguises of the sun.

So far all is clear, because all the names which we have to deal with are intelligible, or, at all events, yield to the softest etymological pressure. But now if we hear the story of Phoibos Apollon falling in love with Daphne, and Daphne praying to her mother, the Earth, to save her from Phoibos; and if we read how either the earth received her in her lap, and then a laurel tree sprang up where she had disappeared, or how she herself was changed into a laurel tree, what shall we think of this? It is a mere story, it might be said, and why should there be any meaning

in it? My answer is, because people do not tell such stories of their gods and heroes, unless there is some sense in them. Besides, if Phoibos means the sun, why should not Daphne have a meaning too? Before, therefore, we can decide whether the story of Phoibos and Daphne is a mere invention, we must try to find out what can have been the meaning of the word Daphne.

In Greek it means a laurel[1], and this would explain the purely Greek legend that Daphne was changed into a laurel tree. But who was Daphne? In order to answer this question, we must have recourse to etymology, or, in other words, we must examine the history of the word. Etymology, as you know, is no longer what it used to be; and though there may still be a classical scholar here and there who crosses himself at the idea of a Greek word being explained by a reference to Sanskrit, we naturally look to Sanskrit as the master-key to many a lock which no Greek

[1] See M. M.'s Chips from a German Workshop (2nd ed.), vol. ii. p. 95, *note* 45.

key will open. Now Daphne, as I have shown, can be traced back to Sanskrit *Ahanâ*, and *Ahanâ* in Sanskrit means the dawn. As soon as we know this, everything becomes clear. The story of Phoibos and Daphne is no more than a description of what every one may see every day; first, the appearance of the Dawn in the eastern sky, then the rising of the Sun as if hurrying after his bride, then the gradual fading away of the bright Dawn at the touch of the fiery rays of the sun, and at last her death or disappearance in the lap of her mother, the Earth. All this seems to me as clear as daylight, and the only objection that could be raised against this reading of the ancient myth would be, if it could be proved that *Ahanâ* does not mean Dawn, and that Daphne cannot be traced back to *Ahanâ*, or that *Helios* does not mean the Sun.

I know there is another objection, but it seems to me so groundless as hardly to deserve an answer. Why, it is asked, should the ancient nations have told these endless stories about the Sun and the Dawn, and why should they have preserved them in their mythology? We might as well ask why the

ancient nations should have invented so many irregular verbs, and why they should have preserved them in their grammar. A fact does not cease to be a fact, because we cannot at once explain it. As far as our knowledge goes at present, we are justified in stating that the Aryan nations preserved not only their grammatical structure, and a large portion of their dictionary, from the time which preceded their separation, but that they likewise retained the names of some of their deities, some legends about their gods, some popular sayings and proverbs, and in these, it may be, the seeds of parables, as part of their common Aryan heirloom. Their mythological lore fills in fact a period in the history of Aryan thought, half-way between the period of language and the period of literature, and it is this discovery which gives to mythology its importance in the eyes of the student of the most ancient history and psychology of mankind.

And do not suppose that the Greeks, or the Hindús, or the Aryan nations in general were the only people who possessed such tales. Wherever we look, in every part of

the world, among uncivilized as well as a civilized people, we find the same kind of stories, the same traditions, the same myths.

I shall give one story from the extreme North, another from the extreme South.

Among the Esquimaux of Repulse Bay, on the West side of Hudson's Bay, on the Arctic Circle, Mr. John Rae picked up the following story:

'Many years ago a great Esquimaux Conqueror gained so much power that he was able to rise unto the heavens, taking with him on one occasion a sister, a very beautiful girl, and some fire. He added much fuel to the fire, and thus formed the Sun. For some time he and his sister lived in great harmony, but after a time he became very cruel, and ill-treated his sister in many ways. She bore it at first with great patience, until at last he threw fire at her, and scorched one side of her face. This spoiling of her beauty was beyond endurance; she therefore ran away from him, and formed the Moon. Her brother then began, and still continues to chase her; but although he sometimes got near, he has not yet overtaken her, nor ever will.

'When it is New Moon, the burnt side of the face is towards us; at Full Moon it is the reverse.'

There are dialectic varieties in the Mythology of the Esquimaux as of the Greeks and Hindus, and, with a change of gender between Sun and Moon, the same story occurs among other tribes in the following form:

'There was a girl at a party, and some one told his love for her by shaking her shoulders, after the manner of the country. She could not see who it was in the dark hut, so she smeared her hands with soot, and when he came back she blackened his cheek with her hand. When a light was brought she saw that it was her brother, and fled. He ran after her, followed her, and as she came to the end of the earth, he sprang out into the sky. Then she became the sun, and he the moon, and this is why the moon is always chasing the sun through the heavens, and why the moon is sometimes dark as he turns his blackened cheek towards the earth[1].'

We now turn to the South, and here, among

[1] The Childhood of the World, by E. Clodd, p. 62.

the lowest of the low, among the Hottentots, who are despised even by their black neighbours, the Zulus, we find the following gem of a fable, beaming with mingled rays of religion and philosophy:

'The Moon, it is said, sent once an insect to men, saying, "Go thou to men, and tell them, As I die, and dying live, so ye shall also die, and dying live." The insect started with the message, but whilst on his way, was overtaken by the hare, who asked: "On what errand art thou bound?" The insect answered, "I am sent by the Moon to men, to tell them that as she dies and dying lives, they also shall die and dying live." The hare said, "As thou art an awkward runner, let me go" (to take the message). With these words he ran off, and when he reached men, he said, "I am sent by the Moon to tell you, As I die, and dying perish, in the same manner ye also shall die and come wholly to an end." Then the hare returned to the Moon, and told her what he had said to men. The Moon reproached him angrily, saying, "Darest thou tell the people a thing which I have not said?" With these words she took up a piece

of wood, and struck him on the nose. Since that day the hare's nose is slit.'

Of this story, too, there are various versions, and in one of them the end is as follows :

'The hare, having returned to the Moon, was questioned as to the message delivered, and the Moon, having heard the true state of the case, became so enraged with him that she took up a hatchet to split his head ; falling short, however, of that, the hatchet fell upon the upper-lip of the hare, and cut it severely. Hence it is that we see the "hare-lip." The hare, being duly incensed at having received such treatment, raised his claws, and scratched the Moon's face ; and the dark parts which we now see on the surface of the Moon are the scars which she received on that occasion[1].'

[1] Reynard the Fox in South Africa, or Hottentot Fables and Tales, by W. H. I. Bleek, 1864, p. 69. As a curious coincidence it may be mentioned that in Sanskrit, too, the Moon is called *sasānka*, i. e. 'having the marks of a hare,' the black marks in the moon being taken for the likeness of the hare. Another coincidence is that the Namaqua Hottentots will not touch hare's flesh (see Sir James E. Alexander's

The Finns, Lapps, and Esthonians do not seem a very poetical race, yet there is poetry even in their smoky huts, poetry surrounded with all the splendour of an arctic night, and fragrant with the perfume of moss and wild flowers. Here is one of their legends:—

'Wanna Issi had two servants, Koit and Ämmarik, and he gave them a torch which Koit should light every morning, and Ämmarik should extinguish in the evening. In order to reward their faithful services, Wanna Issi told them they might be man and wife, but they asked Wanna Issi that he would allow them to remain for ever bride and bridegroom. Wanna Issi assented, and henceforth Koit handed the torch every evening to Ämmarik,

Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa, vol. i. p. 169), because the hare deceived men, while the Jews abstain from it, because the hare is supposed to chew the cud (Lev. xi. 6).

A similar tradition on the meaning of death occurs among the Zulus, but as they do not know of the Moon as a deity, the message that men are not to die, or that they are to die, is sent there by Unkulunkulu, the ancestor of the human race, and thus the whole story loses its point. See Dr. Callaway, Unkulunkulu, p. 4; and Gray, Polynesian Mythology, pp. 16–58.

and Ämmarik took it and extinguished it. Only during four weeks in summer they remain together at midnight; Koit hands the dying torch to Ämmarik, but Ämmarik does not let it die, but lights it again with her breath. Then their hands are stretched out, and their lips meet, and the blush of the face of Ämmarik colours the midnight sky.'

This myth requires hardly any commentary; yet, as long as it is impossible to explain the names, Wanna Issi, Koit, and Ämmarik, it might be said that the story was but a love-story, invented by an idle Lapp, or Finn, or Esthonian. But what if Wanna Issi in Esthonian means the Old Father, and if Koit means the Dawn? Can we then doubt any longer that Ämmarik[1] must be the Gloaming, and that their meeting in the summer reflects those summer evenings when, particularly in the North, the torch of the sun seems never to die, and when the Gloaming is seen kissing the Dawn?

[1] According to a letter just received from an Esthonian lady, *ämmarik* does mean the gloaming in the language of the common people of Esthonia.

I wish I could tell you some more of these stories which have been gathered from all parts of the world, and which, though they may be pronounced childish and tedious by some critics, seem to me to glitter with the brightest dew of nature's own poetry, and to contain those very touches that make us feel akin, not only with Homer or Shakespeare, but even with Lapps, and Finns, and Kaffirs.

I cannot resist the temptation of inserting here a poetical rendering of the story of Koit and Ämmarik, sent to me from the New World, remarking only that instead of Lapland, Esthonia is really the country that may claim the original story.

A LEGEND OF LAPLAND.

As into the dreamy region of our childhood dim and far,
Follow we, and not unwilling, where, beneath the northern star,
Half-formed fancies find an utterance sweet as thoughts of children are.

There to reverent hearts the rainbow archeth still, a pathway strong;
Humanly divine the music of the pine-tree's endless song;
Human love and human longing shine through all the starry throng.

Sweet and fresh the simple story runs in quaint Laplandish rhyme.
As we turn us from our studies when poor children's voices chime,
So we follow, as it woos us back into that olden time:

'Two servants were in Wanna Issi's pay;
A blazing torch their care;
Each morning Koit must light it till its ray
Flamed through the air;

'And every evening Ämmarik's fair hand
Must quench the waning light;
Then over all the weary, waiting land
Fell the still night.

'So passed the time; then Wanna Issi said,
"For faithful service done,
Lo, here reward! To-morrow shall ye wed,
And so be one."

'"Not so," said Koit; "for sweeter far to me
The joy that neareth still;
Then grant us ever fast betrothed to be."
They had their will.

'And now the blazing lustre to transfer
Himself, is all his claim;
Warm from her lover's hand it comes to her,
To quench the flame.

'Only for four times seven lengthening days,
At midnight, do they stand
Together, while Koit gives the dying blaze
To Ämmarik's hand.

'O wonder then! She lets it not expire,
But lights it with her breath—
The breath of love, that, warm with quickening fire,
Wakes life from death.

'Then hands stretch out, and touch, and clasp on high,
Then lip to lip is pressed,
And Ämmarik's blushes tinge the midnight sky
From east to west.'

ANNA C. BRACKETT.

If people cannot bring themselves to believe in solar and celestial myths among the Hindus and Greeks, let them study the folk-lore of the Semitic and Turanian races. I know there is, on the part of some of our most distinguished scholars, the same objection against comparing Aryan to non-Aryan myths, as there is against any attempt to explain the features of Sanskrit or Greek by a reference to Finnish or Bask. In one sense that objection is well founded, for nothing would create greater confusion than to ignore the genealogical principle as the only safe one in a scientific classification of languages, of myths, and even of customs. We must first classify our myths and legends, as we classify our languages and dialects. We must first of

all endeavour to explain what wants explanation in one member of a family by a reference to other members of the same family, before we allow ourselves to glance beyond. But there is in a comparative study of languages and myths not only a philological, but also a philosophical, and more particularly, a psychological interest, and though even in this more general study of mankind, the frontiers of language and race ought never to disappear, yet they can no longer be allowed to narrow or intercept our view. How much the student of Aryan mythology and ethnology may gain for his own progress by allowing himself a wider survey over the traditions and customs of the whole human race, is best known to those who have studied the works of Klemm, Waitz, Bastian, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Tylor, and Dr. Callaway. What is pre-historic in language among the Aryan nations, is frequently found as still historic among Turanian races. The same applies with regard to religions, myths, legends, and customs. Among Finns and Lapps, among Zulus and Maoris, among Khonds and Karens, we sometimes find the most startling analogies to Aryan traditions,

and we certainly learn, again and again, this one important lesson, that as in language, so in mythology, there is nothing which had not originally a meaning, that every name of the gods and heroes had a beginning, a purpose, and a history.

Jupiter was no more called Jupiter by accident, than the Polynesian *Maui*, the Samoyede *Num*, or the Chinese *Tien*[1]. If we can discover the original meaning of these names, we have reached the first ground of their later growth. I do not say that, if we can explain the first purpose of the mythological names, we have solved the whole riddle of mythology, but I maintain that we have gained firm ground. I maintain that every true etymology gives us an historical fact, because the first giving of a name was an historical fact, and an historical fact of the greatest importance for the later development of ancient ideas. Think only of this one fact, which no one would now venture to doubt, that the supreme deity of the Greeks, the Romans, the Germans,

[1] See Lectures on the Science of Religion, pp. 194, 200.

is called by the same name as the supreme deity of the earliest Aryan settlers in India. Does not this one fact draw away the curtain from the dark ages of antiquity, and open before our eyes an horizon which we can hardly measure by years? The Greek *Zeus* is the same word as the Latin *Ju* in *Jupiter*, as the German *Tiu;* and all these were merely dialectic varieties of the Vedic *Dyaus*[1]. Now *dyaus* in Sanskrit is the name of the sky, if used as a feminine; if used as a masculine, as it is still in the Veda, it is the sky as a man or as a god—it is Zeus, the father of gods and men. You know, of course, that the whole language of ancient India is but a sister dialect of Greek, Latin, of German, Celtic, and Slavonic, and that if the Greek says *es-ti*, he is, if the Roman says *est*, the German *ist*, the Slave *yesté*, the Hindu, three thousand years ago, said *as-ti*, he is. This *as-ti* is a compound of a root *as*, to be, and the pronoun *ti*. The root meant originally *to breathe*, and dwindled down after a time to

[1] See my Lectures on the Science of Language (7th ed.), vol. ii. p. 468.

the meaning of *to be*. All this must have happened before a single Greek or German reached the shores of Europe, and before a single Brahman descended into the plains of India. At that distant time we must place the gradual growth of language and ideas, of a language which we are still speaking, of ideas which we are still thinking; and at the same time only can we explain the framing of those names which were the first attempts at grasping supernatural powers, which became in time the names of the deities of the ancient world, the heroes of mythology, the chief actors in many a legend, nay, some of which have survived in the nursery tales of our own time[1].

My time, I see, is nearly over, but before I finish, I feel that I have a duty to perform from which I ought not to shrink. Some of those who have honoured me with their presence to-night may recollect that about a year ago a lecture was delivered in this very room by Professor Blackie, in which he tried to throw

[1] See a most interesting essay, Le Petit Poucet (Tom Thumb), by Gaston Paris.

discredit on the scientific method of the interpretation of popular myths, or on what I call Comparative Mythology. Had he confined his remarks to the subject itself, I should have felt most grateful for his criticisms, little minding the manner in which they were conveyed—for a student of language knows what words are made of. Nor, had his personal reflections concerned myself alone, should I have felt called upon to reply to them thus publicly, for it has always seemed to me that unless we protest against unmerited praise, we have no right to protest against unmerited abuse. I believe I can appeal to all here present, that during the many years I have had the honour to lecture in this Institution, I have not once allowed myself to indulge in any personal remarks, or attacked those who, being absent, cannot defend themselves. Even when I had to answer objections, or to refute false theories, I have always most carefully avoided mentioning the names of living writers. But as Professor Blackie has directed his random blows, not against myself, but against a friend of mine, Mr. Cox, the author of a work on Aryan Mythology, I feel that I

must for once try to get angry, and return blow for blow. Professor Blackie speaks of Mr. Cox as if he had done nothing beyond repeating what I had said before. Nothing can be more unfair. My own work in Comparative Mythology has consisted chiefly in laying down some of the general principles of that science, and in the etymological interpretation of some of the ancient names of gods, goddesses, and heroes. In fact, I have made it a rule never to interpret or to compare the legends of India, Greece, Italy, or Germany, except in cases where it was possible, first of all, to show an identity or similarity in the Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, or German names of the principal actors. Mr. Cox having convinced himself that the method which I have followed in mythology rests on sound and truly scientific principles, has adopted most, though by no means all, of my etymological interpretations. Professor Blackie, on the contrary, without attempting any explanation of the identity of mythological names in Greek and Sanskrit which must be either disproved or explained, thunders forth the following sentence of condemnation:—'Even under the

scientific guidance of a Bopp, a Pott, a Grimm, and a Müller, a sober man may sometimes, even in the full blaze of the new sun of comparative philology, allow himself to drink deep draughts, if not of *maundering madness*, at least of *manifest hallucination*.'

If such words are thrown at my head, I pick them up chiefly as etymological curiosities, and as striking illustrations of what Mr. Tylor calls 'survivals in culture,' showing how the most primitive implements of warfare, rude stones and unpolished flints, which an ethnologist would suppose to be confined to pre-historic races, to the red Indians of America or the wild Picts of Caledonia, turn up again most unexpectedly at the present day in the very centre of civilized life. All I can say is, that if, as a student of Comparative Mythology, I have been drinking deep draughts of maundering madness, I have been drinking in good company. In this respect Mr. Cox has certainly given me far more credit than I deserve. I am but one out of many labourers in this rich field of scientific research, and he ought to have given far greater prominence

to the labours of Grimm, Burnouf, Bopp, and, before all, of my learned friend, Professor Kuhn.

But while, with regard to etymology, Mr. Cox contents himself with reporting the results of other scholars, he stands quite independent in his own treatment of Comparative Mythology. Of this Professor Blackie seems to have no suspicion whatever. The plan which Mr. Cox follows is to collect the coincidences in the legends themselves, and to show how in different myths the same story with slight variations is told again and again of different gods and heroes. In this respect his work is entirely original and very useful; for although these coincidences may be explained in different ways, and do not afford a proof of a common historical origin of the mythologies of India, Greece, Italy, and Germany, they are all the more interesting from a purely psychological point of view, and supply important material for further researches. Mr. Tylor has lately worked with great success in the same rich mine; extending the limits of mythological research far beyond the precincts of the Aryan world, and showing that there are solar myths

wherever the sun shines. I differ from Mr. Cox on many points, as he differs from me. I shall certainly keep to my own method of never attempting an interpretation or a comparison, except where the ground has first been cleared of all uncertainty by etymological research, and where the names of different gods and heroes have been traced back to a common source. I call this the *nominalistic* as opposed to the *realistic* method of Comparative Mythology, and it is the former only that concerns the student of the Science of Language. I gratefully acknowledge, however, the help which I have received from Mr. Cox's work, particularly as suggesting new clusters of myths that might be disentangled by etymological analysis.

But not only has Professor Blackie failed to perceive the real character of Mr. Cox's researches, but he has actually charged him with holding opinions which both Mr. Cox and myself have repeatedly disavowed, and most strenuously opposed. Again and again have we warned the students of Comparative Mythology that they must not expect to be able to explain everything. Again and again have we pointed

out that there are irrational elements in my thology, and that we must be prepared to find grains of local history on which, as I said[1], the sharpest tools of Comparative Mythology must bend or break. Again and again have we shown that historical persons[2]—not only Cyrus and Charlemagne, but Frederick Barbarossa and even Frederick the Great—have been drawn into the vortex of popular mythology. Yet these are the words of Professor Blackie: 'The cool way in which Max Müller and his English disciple, Mr. Cox, assume that there are no human figures and historical characters in the whole gallery of heroes and demi-

[1] Chips from a German Workshop, vol. ii. p. 172:—'Here then we see that mythology does not always create its own heroes, but that it lays hold of real history, and coils itself round it so closely that it is difficult, nay, almost impossible, to separate the ivy from the oak, the lichen from the granite to which it clings. And here is a lesson which comparative mythologists ought not to neglect. They are naturally bent on explaining everything that can be explained; but they should bear in mind that there may be elements in every mythological riddle which resist etymological analysis, for the simple reason that their origin was not etymological, but historical.'

[2] Lectures on the Science of Language, vol. ii. p. 581.

gods in the Greek mythology, is something very remarkable.'

I readily admit that some of the etymologies which I have proposed of mythological names are open to criticism; and if, like other scholars, Professor Blackie had pointed out to me any cases where I might seem to him to have offended against Grimm's law or other phonetic rules, I should have felt most grateful; but if he tells me that the Greek Erinys should not be derived from the Sanskrit *Saranyû*, but from the Greek verb ἐρινύειν, to be angry, he might as well derive *critic* from *to criticise*[1]; and if he maintains that a name may have

[1] Professor Blackie quotes Pausanias in support of this etymology. He says: 'The account of Pausanias (viii. 25, 26), according to which the terrible impersonation of conscience, or the violated moral law, is derived from ἐρινύειν, an old Greek verb originally signifying to be angry, has sufficient probability, not to mention the obvious analogy of Ἀραί, another name sometimes given to the awful maids (σεμναί), from ἀρά, an imprecation.' If Professor Blackie will refer to Pausanias, he will find that the Arcadians assigned a very different cause to the anger of Demeter, which is supposed to have led to the formation of her new name Erinys.

two or three legitimate etymologies, I can only answer that we might as well say that a child could have two or three legitimate mothers.

I have most reluctantly entered upon these somewhat personal explanations, and I should not have done so if I alone had been concerned in Professor Blackie's onslaught. I hope, however, that I have avoided everything that could give just offence to Professor Blackie, even if he should be present here to-night. Though he abuses me as a German, and laughs at the instinctive aversion to external facts and the extravagant passion for self-evolved ideas as national failings of all Germans (I only wonder that the story of the camel and the inner consciousness did not come in), yet I know that for many years German poetry and German scholarship have had few more ardent admirers, and German scholars few more trusty friends, than Professor Blackie. Nationality, it seems to me, has as little to do with scholarship as with logic. On the contrary, in every nation he that will work hard and reason honestly may be sure to discover some grains of truth. National jealousies and animosities have no

place in the republic of letters, which is, and I trust always will be, the true international republic of all friends of work, of order, and of truth.